



From Our Rector & Deacon

You might have noticed that I have been slowly building up our children's library corner at St Raphael's. There are some wonderful new and progressive books being written these days for children and I have gathered a few for our children – we read a few during VBS in 2019.

I have recently discovered a new one called 'Breathe' by Laura Alary. It is a child's guide to Ascension, Pentecost and the Growing Time. It so gently introduces practices of prayer and mindfulness, and wonderings about justice, generosity and kindness. The new breath of the season of Pentecost is described in terms of changing colors and the greening of nature taking a deep breath and getting ready to grow. Troubles (like the news to the disciples of Jesus' leaving) is like being breathless, and then holding breath and waiting. And then the story becomes that of breathing in at Pentecost the Spirit that was in Jesus. The Spirit remains, always, as close as our own breath. We learn new ways to breath out that Spirit in prayer and in words of peace, joy, love and hope. Breathing in and out, the Spirit changes the world through us.



Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koevering

The Bible tells us of surprising ways that the disciples saw the world change, and we learn to see this growing and changing life around us through the season of the 'growing time', the green season of Pentecost which carries us right through summer and Fall to the end of November at the end of the church calendar.

After the separations and isolations, we shall all be relearning how to breath during this new Pentecost season. We will meet again, gather for worship and fellowship, catch up with each other again. We are planning lots of opportunities for outside gatherings during the summer, and invite you to bring a coffee or picnic to meet others outside. Our gardens and Tobit's Trace provide beautiful places to meet and chat. We invite you to our 'Mozart on the Lawn' event on May 2 at 3pm, the fun service of 'beating the bounds' at midday on May 16 where we bless our grounds and our life together, and to the Sage's Bring Your Own Picnic on May 20. Later in the summer, we have planned another Family Day outside on July 17, and then VBS for the week of July 26-30. Book studies of 'Spirituality Workbook' will be held between the services from the end of May. And coffee outside between the services throughout the season! So, for now, we hold you all in our prayers, and when you are ready, look forward to welcoming you!

God bless you with the presence of the Spirit,
Love, Helen



Deacon Charles

Richard Beck, a professor of psychology in Texas, has a new book out titled *Hunting Magic Eels: Recovering an Enchanted Faith in a Skeptical Age*. In it he advocates for what he calls a sacramental ontology—an attitude which sees everything around us as signposts pointing to God.

For instance, the blooms we see now are beautiful, visible signs of the not-yet-fully visible reality of resurrection. The dogwoods which have made it through the death of winter are in a riotous and joyful display of new life. Within Christian imagination, they are nudges which remind us of God's promise to make all things new at the end of days.

Every single thing around us has this potential. If we engage with the world with prayerful attention, everything we interact with can draw us closer to God's presence and love.

Having this kind of prayerful attention takes purposeful intention, though. I don't know about you, but I can often slide into an attitude of distracted impatience as I wait in line at the grocery store. Oftentimes I don't embrace this pause in my day as an invitation to divine contemplation. I see it as an annoying inconvenience.

Spiritual exercises have been a great help to me as I am trying more and more to prayerfully engage with all facets of my life. There are potentially hundreds of spiritual exercises Christian people can adopt, but a group of us at St. Raphael's recently studied a handful of them: prayer, study, service, generosity and sharing. It was a very beneficial time for me. If you were not able to do that study with us and would like to see what we did, the course is archived on the diocese's web page and freely available:
<https://diolink.org/diolex/index.php/5-spiritual-exercises/>

One could say that the point of spiritual exercises is to help produce within us the kind of sacramental ontology that Richard Beck describes. Here is how Beck puts it: "The point of the Spiritual Exercises is cultivating an attentiveness, awareness, openness, and receptivity toward God."

If I could go back and revisit the spiritual exercise we studied together, I'd add a sixth one: Notice the dogwoods.

Senior Warden's Corner



Dave Sevigny Sr. Warden

After completing Renewalworks last year, one of my personal goals was to work out spiritually in 2021. Many of us spend time eating right and doing some sort of physical and mental workout (I know-I see Facebook posts of meals, bike rides and workouts). One of my friends gave me sound advice about working out many years ago. She told me that if I don't "enjoy it", I probably won't stick with it. So, I have continued to try different workout experiences that could become the highlight of my physical day. I've found walking and bike riding meet those needs and they are easy to do most anywhere.

On the spiritual side, I am dabbling. My daughter would say I'm doing "class pass" where you try a bunch of different stuff to see what you like. One spiritual workout program Helen gave me was some prayer beads for Lent, and the basic instructions. I put those in my pants or jacket pockets so as I walk (something I enjoy) and can fiddle with them and do a round or two of prayer. Its pretty simple, an enjoyable way to start my walk as I prepare to see what God has in store for me as I walk the streets around my home.

I also realize that sometimes, working out with others is a way to create an accountability trap, so a few weeks ago I started the Diocese of Lexington wide program called Alpha. (<https://alphausa.org/alpha-online>), which is an international program that you watch a video centering on some aspect of the teachings of Jesus Christ and discuss it with a small group. We're part of a group from all over the US, and about 10 of us from the Diocese of Lexington break into our own zoom small group for roughly 1 hour a week. It's been fun because we come with all sorts of different views on the topics, and it does stretch my spiritual muscles. The program is maybe 6-8 weeks long. Long enough to keep a commitment, but not too long in case I really don't like it. I shared some things with Tony Lobianco from it, because he always has little pearls of wisdom to point out (we did EFM together). It was enjoyable to have a back-and-forth email debate with him on a few subjects. I think we both miss that from our EFM days.

I also officially started my CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) program in April. God tapped me on the shoulder during a dinner church at St. Raphael's, and then continued to tap over the course of a year-with multiple people from different parts of my life recommending I become a CASA volunteer. It feels like a calling should feel-a bit scary, wondering if I can do it-etc. But I know God watches out for me.

Lastly, I'm joining a small pilot religious formation group that will meet weekly for six weeks that we hope to roll out parish wide as we begin in person meetings and discussions again. There is nothing like being in person with a half a dozen folks (there is no hiding!) to talk about some meaningful topics. I look forward to it and getting to know some of these guys better.

My hope for this Eastertide is that God provides some paths for all of you to dabble and engage yourself in that allow you to work out the spiritual side of your life. If someone calls you to engage you in something that might stretch you a bit-please consider it-your participation may unlock something that God has been trying to unlock in you for a long time. Every work out starts with taking the first step.

A View from the Pew

Let's come in to go out

Before the pandemic Reverend Helen spoke of taking the church out to the community. This aligns with her strong advocacy for helping others, starting with those right in our community. Little did any of us know how literal this would become as the pandemic forced the church to reach us, and hopefully others through us, beyond its sacred shell. And Reverend Helen and Deacon Charles have done a terrific job throughout. They have used today's technology to bring the church out to us on a near daily basis. And along with other diocesan, national, and even international sources, church sources have been available on a 24/7 basis.



Richard Dawahare

The ability to worship and connect together virtually, though far apart physically, has been a real blessing. It has worked, not just for church matters, but for business and social activities as well. So all this time I was wondering what will happen when the pandemic is over. Will this continue to be the norm, or will we gather once again under the old wooden beams encased in ancient stone, amidst the flora and fauna on Parkers Mill Road?

Well, I've been going back to my customary 8:30 service and I can say that while it is so easy to worship at home, the real life experience inevitably creates additional UPSG (Unexpected Positive Spiritual Gifts), i.e. magic. The service, the reconnections with old churchmates, the setting, both indoor and out, create new opportunities for the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. To be sure the Holy Spirit flows as it flows wherever we are. But after having attended in person I and others experienced the value of good old-fashioned connectedness.

Maybe we need to come in (as we are able), so that we can better go out. Reaping the benefits of traditional in-person worship will better enable us to take the church out into the world and better serve our community, as well as feed our souls.

Christian Education Update

Greetings,

As a girl growing up at Mary Queen of the Holy Rosary, I would sit with my Mother and Father every week listening and participating with those around me. I learned slowly over time what the words and the actions meant. I learned, sometimes with a sharp word and poke, that I was in the Lord's house. Arguing with my younger brother was frowned upon! Church became a place that was safe; where I began my spiritual journey; and one I hope to encourage my grandsons to begin.

With that being said, I would like to invite you as we move back into the church to think about bringing your children or grandchildren to church with you. The involvement of children in our worship experience cannot be understated.

Janis Rosebrook and I want to share what is going to happen with Children's Formation. In the last few weeks those of you who attend our services saw bags with different colored ribbon at the back of the church. Each ribbon reflects the stage the child might be in reading. Inside the bags are little gifts and crafts, but also papers with lessons that coincide with the message that is preached by Reverend Helen or Deacon Charles.

During Pentecost, the book that will be discussed at the Adult Formation meeting, will be a focus of the materials we provide to our children in their "church bags."

Our Vacation Bible School (VBS) is scheduled for July 26-30. Our theme is "Compassion". A Family Picnic will be held on Saturday, July 24 to introduce parents/grandparents to the materials we are using, and to answer any questions.

One of our primary goals and vision at Saint Raphael to encourage children to become an active part of the community. Please support our goals as we move forward from these months of quarantine.

Thank you for sharing your faith.
Amy Fowler

PRAYER FOR YOUR CHURCH FAMILY IN SUCH A TIME AS THIS:

"Be still and know I am God," Psalm 46:10

1. GOD, GRANT US HEALTH AND SAFETY.

Pray for your church: God, keep us, our families, our community, and our church family from all harm. Preserve our physical and mental health as we seek to serve you faithfully.

"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well" (3 John 1:2).

2. GOD, GRANT US HUMILITY.

Pray for your church: As we seek your will, clothe us with the humility that comes from you: in seeking wise counsel, teach us what it looks like to submit to you.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12).

3. GOD, GRANT US WISDOM.

Pray for your church: God, our gracious guide: show us Your prepared paths and how to walk in your ways.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5).

4. GOD, GRANT US COURAGE.

Pray for your church: God, grant us courage to follow and equip us to do your will.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

5. GOD, GRANT US PATIENCE.

Pray for your church: During these stressful times, may our church family practice patience with one another.

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2).

6. GOD, GRANT US UNITY.

Pray for your church: Lord, within our body, people are of different minds about how to

faithfully proceed. Grant us unity to walk together in mind and thought.

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

7. GOD, GRANT US RESOURCES.

Pray for your church: As we all—individuals and families and organizations—adjust to an ever-changing social and financial climate, may God be our good provider of all we need to be faithful.

"And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (1 Corinthians 9:8).

8. GOD, GRANT US REFRESHMENT.

Pray for your church: gracious God, in our weariness, you are the one who refreshes souls. Protect our church family and church leaders from burnout and renew our hearts.

"He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake" (Psalm 23:3).

9. GOD, GRANT US LOVE AND SUPPORT.

Pray for your church: our Father, give us all the time, opportunity, and grace to love and be loved.

"Do everything in love" (1 Corinthians 16:14).

10. GOD, MEET THE NEEDS OF THOSE OF WHICH I'M NOT AWARE.

Pray for your church: Jesus, you know every hair on our heads. I ask that you would meet the needs of others of which I'm not even aware. Thank you for your gracious care.

"We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans" (Romans 8:26).

PRAY FOR YOUR CHURCH

Final prayer: God, you promise to hear us when we call on you and assure us that you know our needs, even before we do. Thank you for your Spirit who "intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God." Amen

A Church Mouse in God's House



So, I guess, "you're welcome" would be an appropriate response from all of us to all of you regarding your vaccines. Do you realize how many of us were used as test subjects? It's a big issue within the mouse community and one that I've been reluctant to bring up with you all. There's really no way of getting around the issue that this practice pretty clearly implies that our lives are less worthy than yours. I'm not going to condemn you all for thinking that, but I do have some questions about how you arrived at that position.

I mean, I realize that in the past you have treated some members of your own species this way. I guess you figured their lives were less worthy as well. But now you have very strict rules against doing so. And I know that there are some rules in place about what you can do to us, but frankly not nearly enough.

What does it mean when you say, "life matters?" Are you strictly talking about human life? Are you talking about a greater care for all of creation? Does it matter just in the sense that it should be preserved instead of killed, or do you mean that you are actively doing the most that you can to preserve the dignity of all life? Is it better to end a few lives if it will save the lives of many more? I know that one of your great philosophers has said that the "needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few," but this assumes not only that the needs are the same across groups but the values of members lives are the same across groups.

So, I guess what I'm saying is I can't figure it all out. And I'd like to say that I trust you all as humans to be able to answer these larger philosophical questions. But, let's face it your track record isn't exactly great. I'm glad that we helped you get your vaccines, and this time we didn't even lose too many of our own. One way that you could thank us is to actually get the vaccine yourselves. If you're going to risk killing us to try to save yourselves from a disease that we don't even get than I think you have a moral obligation to use the stuff. It might surprise you to know that we really do want you to have long, healthy and successful lives.



Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please continue to support St. Raphael Episcopal Church.

Introducing a new online giving portal in 2021 - 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.

Christian Ed Request

The Sunday School and VBS are in need of a Music CD player. If you have an extra one please contact Janis at 626-389-7474 or Janis.Rosebrook@mac.com.

Upcoming Receptions and Confirmations

If you are interested in being Confirmed, or Received into the Episcopal church from another denomination, please contact Rev. Helen.

Yarn needs a good home

There are about 5 bags of yarn and a bag of material that were left in the corner of the Wedding Room downstairs. Amy Fowler and Janis Rosebrook are cleaning the room out. If the yarn and/or fabric belongs to you, please take it home by Palm Sunday (March 28). If no one claims the bags, then the contents will be donated. Please contact Janis Rosebrook at 626-389-7474 or email at Janis.rosebrook@mac.com if you know who this "stuff" belongs to -- or -- you would like to claim some or all of it for yourself. We have a surplus of yarn for Vacation Bible School.

Costume Jewelry Needs a Good Home

About 12 boxes of costume jewelry were left some time ago in one of the downstairs classrooms. The jewelry is new, all in plastic sleeves. Jewelry includes earrings, bracelets and necklaces. We need to find the donor so that we can proceed in either returning the items, or donating them.

Please contact Janis Rosebrook at 626-389-7474 or email at Janis.rosebrook@mac.com if you know who donated the jewelry. If we don't hear from anyone we will take care of re-homing the jewelry.

Sages picnic Thursday May 20th at 11:30 a.m.

St. Raphael members who are over 50 and friends, bring your lunch to eat together outdoors in the lovely church grounds.

Thy Kingdom Come

Join in with a worldwide prayer initiative for the 11 days between Ascension and Pentecost (May 13-23): **'Thy Kingdom Come'** offers many resources for all ages, but we shall be focusing on the Novena prayers with the psalms and the call to focused prayer for five people during this time. The Daughters of the King are making this a national project, and our own Diane (Vice-President for the Daughters of DioLex) has some wonderful ideas for our church during this season. Remember the five prayer stations she created in church in 2018? Look out for this year's creativity!

Check out the website here: [RC1053_TKC_Novena2021_V5-WEB.pdf](#)
(thykingdomcome.global)

PRAYING FOR THE KINGDOM – Thy Kingdom Come Prayer Almighty God, your ascended son has sent us into the world to preach the good news of your kingdom: inspire us with your Spirit and fill our hearts with the fire of your love, that all who hear your word may be drawn to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen

Jonathan Crosmer & Friends

Present an

OUTDOOR CONCERT

Featuring local musicians

Playing Mozart's String Trio and other works

FREE OF CHARGE

Relax at small tables and enjoy an afternoon of LIVE MUSIC

Plenty of space available for your comfort and safety

Snacks provided (or bring your own)

Good for the soul!

3:00 pm Sunday, May 2, 2021

(Raindate 5/9)

May Birthdays and Anniversaries

Ron Binkauskas	5/1	Bonnie & Buck Conaway	5/18
Bill Price	5/3	C.C. Johnson	5/21
Samantha Curci	5/5	Jackie Laborda	5/21
Pat Dinsmore	5/5	Lizzie Lorton	5/23
Tom Vance	5/5	Logan Jacobs	5/24
Lisa Booth	5/5	Kayla Colliver	5/25
Hilda Fletcher	5/9	Rony Massaquoi	5/26
David Fowler	5/9	Emma Mathews	5/30
Brantly Jacobs	5/9	George Stevenson	5/30
Marguerite Emmons	5/13		
Peggy Oakes	5/13		
Rose Canon	5/18		

Anniversaries

Beverly & Robert Bouse	5/26
Jennifer & Steve Krolak	5/28
Amanda & Tom Vance	5/29

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.

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: Ruth, Diane, Kenneth, Bob, Seth, Elaine, Eloise, Brandon, Eleanor, Chris and his family, and Drew.

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.

Please contact Rev. Helen for prayer list changes.

Services - Current Schedule

Sunday Services

In Person worship 8:30 (Outdoor weather permitting)

& 11:00 indoors with music

Virtual Worship on Facebook & You Tube

11:00 a.m. Rite II

Livestreams are available on demand afterwards and are posted on our website when available at <https://sreclex.org/virtual>

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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Articles and news information for May. must be submitted by **May 25, 2021** to Dana Berry at danabruceberry@gmail.com

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