



The Herald

St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church

Vol. 59 No. 3 Lent 2024

Worship

Sundays

Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:30 a.m.

Holy Eucharist Rite II with music, 11:00 a.m.

Wednesdays

Eucharist with Healing, Noon

Compline

Tuesdays, and Fridays, 7:00 p.m. online

Dinner Church

2/24 at 5:30

Ash Wednesday 2/14

Services Noon and 6:30 pm

From Our Rector

During Epiphany, you have been hearing me talk a lot about 'rooted discipleship' and the practices of prayer, study, giving, sharing, and serving. We also had the opportunity to attend the showing of 'A Case for Love,' a documentary film based on the insights and vision of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry on selfless love. I am grateful for the vision and work of the Episcopal Church in focusing on love as the Way to follow Jesus through rest, learning, turning, blessing, and worship. Working with five points is a popular and simple way to remember the Way of Love. They are practices that Jesus offers us in Mark's gospel:



Rev. Canon Dr.
Helen Van Koevering

Prayer: at the very beginning, in Mark 1, we hear of Jesus' daily practice: 'Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place where he prayed.' If you feel like you need to relearn the basics, pick up 'Just Praying' at church.

Study: Jesus taught in parables and, in Mark, often concealed the significance of his words directed to his disciples. It takes some study to hear and understand teaching from one context to our own. There are

always some materials at church, such as Forward Movement, to help you along.

Serving: Peter's mother-in-law taught us that serving isn't only for women or specific people, but for us all. We are to follow Jesus' way of serving others, not being served. That takes some practise.

Sharing: church is a place to gather and welcome everyone, and to learn from and with others. How about committing to attending church every Sunday of Lent, or every day during Holy Week, to share with others this Lenten journey?

Giving: our church community speaks of giving time, treasure, and talent. There are many ways to do this inside and outside the church. We have opportunities for giving your time to garden, flower arrange, visit shut-ins, do some house cleaning at church, organize a gathering for a meal, for Dinner Church or brunch on Easter Sunday. Let us know!

The 40 days of Lent (not including Sundays, which are days of celebration) begin on Ash Wednesday, when we receive a smudged, black cross on our foreheads made from the ashes of last year's palms. Our services will be at midday and with music at 6.30pm. Lent ends on the Saturday before Easter Sunday. Lent is a time of preparation, an opportunity to go deeper with God, especially to examine our practices of prayer, giving and fasting (abstaining from something to focus more on God). Fasting could mean taking up something (perhaps more prayer, reading a book of devotions or spirituality, giving our time, talent, and treasure to something specific for the duration of Lent). Lent is an opportunity offered in the church year for preparation of our hearts and minds for Palm Sunday, the events of Holy Week and the Triduum: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, Easter.

Plan to join us during Holy Week. Not just on Palm Sunday at 11 am, but perhaps at midday on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Consider walking through the events of Holy Week by coming to each of the Triduum services: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Saturday Vigil. There has not been a Holy week when I haven't gained new insight and deepening of my own faith. I'd love you to join me!

With much love,

Rev Helen

Senior Warden's Corner



Amy Smereck

Where did January go? It went by very quickly for me. Suddenly, it's February and I felt like I missed the impetus for self-reflection and self-improvement that the turn of the new year brings. Then I remembered... Lent! I love our church calendar, celebrating a full 12 days of Christmas, and then Epiphany before the contemplative season of Lent.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which falls on February 14 this year. (You can't spell Valentine's Day without Lent!) Some Facebook memes have suggested heart-shaped ashes would be appropriate, but that's up to Rev. Helen.

Since the Diocesan Vision report was released in 2020, Rev. Helen and the Vestry have selected one of the vision goals for St. Raphael's each year. The focus in 2024 is Rooted Discipleship. From the report: "Discipleship is about relationship. God invites us into a deep and abiding relationship and longs for us to discover the life God created for us to live here on Earth, and forever in Eternity." Our relationship with God is strengthened through the spiritual practices of praying, studying, serving, giving, and sharing.

Lent is the perfect time to devote extra attention to these practices. For a start, attend church regularly in Lent. Join the Bible Study at 9:45 am Sundays. Explore the resources for independent study. Look for opportunities to give of your time, talent, and treasure. Share your faith with others and invite them to church. Get to know others at St. Raphael who are on this spiritual journey with you. Connect after church, attend a fellowship event, join a committee, join the choir, and volunteer.

Welcome, Dr. Vicki Bell!

St. Raphael welcomed Dr. Vicki Bell to be our Interim Organist and Choir Director on February 1st at choir rehearsal, and her first service was February 4th. Dr. Vicki is retiring from Asbury College, where she is Professor of music theory and Director of the Asbury Chorale. She has previously served as organist/choirmaster at Trinity Episcopal Church in Danville and at Good Shepherd.

Vicki has lots of wonderful music in store for us this season. She likes to draw from the selection of anthems at St. James Press and also traditional Renaissance pieces. At our first choir rehearsal she expressed her desire to get to know all of us and our voices. She led us through some fun exercises to help us improve our sound. Her love of music and working with choir members was evident. We enjoyed hearing about her family and the cats who seem to seek her out, demanding adoption. She brought us a new soprano choir scholar, Annie Wilder, who was formerly her student at Asbury. Please welcome Dr. Vicki, and of course let her know if you are interested in singing with the choir.



Children's Ministry

GODLY PLAY: The children are progressing through Epiphany with parable stories. We just learned of the Parables of the Great Pearl, The Good Samaritan, and The Good Shepherd. Coming up are the Parables of the Sower and the Leaven. We then prepare for Easter.

LENT: This year we are asking the children to take on something for Lent (instead of giving up something). We will ask them to decide on how to help make others feel good and to become a contributing member of their household. For instance, they can set the table or clear the dishes without being reminded; they could make their bed every morning (!) or maybe feed a pet.

At church, each child will have a "secret friend" during Lent. They might send an anonymous card in the mail or leave a little surprise in our story room for their friend. Handmade items are better than store bought items. Their friend's name will be revealed at Easter.

ASH WEDNESDAY: Please, if possible, bring your child to get ashes on Ash Wednesday. We will be talking about what the ashes symbolize and the seriousness of our Lenten Journey. Rev. Helen suggested that we, in the context of the lesson, allow the children to ash each other's forehead. We will do this the Sunday before Ash





Wednesday. Please ask your child about the ash, what it means, and would they come with you to service on Ash Wednesday.

ATTENDANCE: The snow in January made it difficult to get small children to church, and we understand of course. However, since we are entering a most solemn and wonderful time of the church year, we would love to have all the children attend Chapel every Sunday. If you are unable to get to church, a text would be most helpful. We plan activities that require preparation and some cost. We can better utilize our resources if we know ahead of time who will NOT be at Chapel. Text Janis (626) 389-7474 or Diane (859) 224-4762.

--The Chapel Team: Janis, Diane and Amanda

BUILD

BUILD's mission is to Do Justice as God requires us. St. Raphael's has been a member of BUILD for over six years, supporting the efforts to identify, research and find solutions for the problems that impact our city. It is BUILD's commitment to bring together diverse congregations to make our community more like God intends - where there is justice and equal opportunity for all citizens. In 2023 BUILD was instrumental in securing funding through the city council for decent, safe and affordable housing. Positive outcomes have been achieved in reducing youth violence/homicides through the CURE strategy and P.I.E.R. approach. BUILD monitors these efforts by our city to improve safety. Councilmember Chuck Ellinger is bringing Micro Transit funding to council - a much needed service providing transportation for those who are unable to access standard transportation services. Micro Transit bridges the gap and creates better and more equal communities. It's how a citizen with a mental health issue or a senior living on the outskirts can get to a medical appointment in a timely manner, or how a bright young student in a disadvantaged neighborhood can get to a life-changing internship. These are just a few examples of the work of BUILD.

We greatly appreciate the past support our congregation has given us. On April 30th, we will again invite you to join us for the most important and powerful event of the year - Nehemiah Action. This event will bring together 1500 BUILD justice members, faith leaders and friends, to hold our city council members and other city officials accountable to do what is just, right and fair. Everyone is invited. Please plan to attend.

--Diane Whorley

Announcements

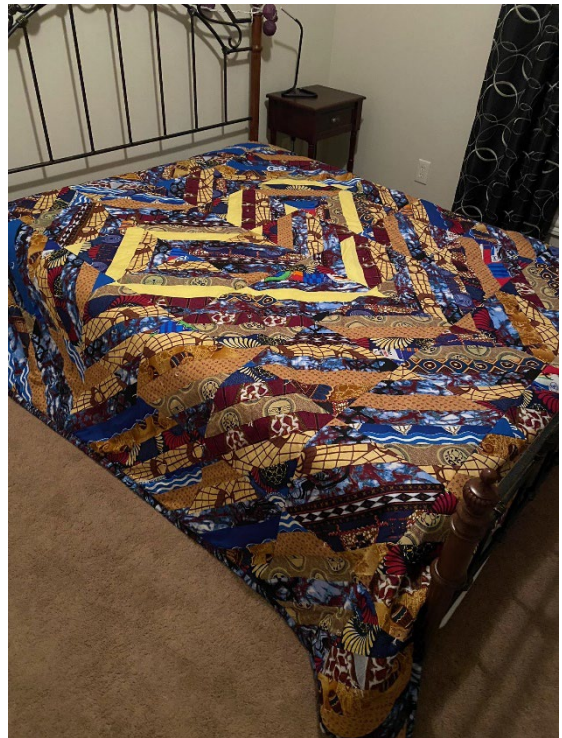
Crafters Group

February 17 and March 16 at 10 am in the Parish Hall. Bring a project to work on, or just check out what others are doing and chat. *Right: a quilt made by Rev. Helen from African prints.*

Church Properties

A small, temporary working group is being formed to explore ways we can increase our revenue by finding compatible tenants. If you have ideas to share, please email them to Laurie Daugherty at lcaugh@gmail.com. If you'd like to join the group, please let me know!

The Properties Committee is looking ahead to Spring. March begins the season for tending to our beautiful landscape beds and plants. I have divided the areas around the building into four "zones." If anyone is interested in taking on responsibility to weed and tend to a zone, please let Rev. Helen or Laurie Daugherty know.



Saturday April 20 is a Tobit's Trace workday to restore the gravel walking path and kiosk. This is being done with grant funds from the Lexington Parks Equity Accelerator. Volunteers are invited to come help!

Sages and Friends

The third week of February is already very busy, so we have decided to cancel the February meeting. The next meeting will be **March 21st at 11:30 pm**, place TBD. If you would like to be on the Sages & Friends distribution list, contact Janis Rosebrook at janis.rosebrook@mac.com.

Pancake Supper

Before we dive into Ash Wednesday and Lent, we will have our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper (Tuesday, **February 13 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm** in the parish hall.) Bring your appetite and feast on pancakes and all the trimmings. If you can help flip pancakes, please contact me at amy.smereck@gmail.com.

Dinner Church: Identity and Justice

Saturday, **February 24 at 5:30 pm** in the parish hall. Our speaker will be Jon Roller, pastor at Beaumont Presbyterian Church. The topic is Identity and Justice. At Dinner Church we share a potluck meal in the context of the Eucharist. The elements (bread and wine) are shared over dinner. We share in discussion and fellowship, conversation flowing at first from our speaker's message, then following where it goes with our dinner companions. Lasagna provided. Bring a salad, side dish, or dessert to share. If you can help with set up or clean up, please contact Amy Smereck at amy.smereck@gmail.com.

Reflection

As I sit here at Tobit's trace on a February evening, I'm awaiting the rebirth of Spring. God makes beauty out of ashes. I'm living proof of that. My faith journey has taken many twists and turns. In June of 2018, my rebirth began.

During my spiritual awakening, many truths long buried rose up to the surface. God showed me what my wounds were and what I needed desperately to heal. I had a dream of an altar. I had no idea why until I walked into the doors of St R. It was the same altar that was in my dream.

June 2018 was one of the darkest periods of my life. I had been searching for a while to find what I thought was enlightenment, but June 12 2018 was the day I found enlightenment. I fell to my knees on the floor of my mom's living room and cried out to God. I prayed, 'Lord God, please help me.' I hadn't prayed in over 15 years. Two days later, I was led to St R's. I was actually planning to go to St R to view an art exhibition. When I got there, I was greeted by Bonnie and she told me that the art exhibition was over, but that I was welcome to look around the church if I wanted to. I was about to leave and then something happened that day. Something I couldn't explain. I began to weep in the sanctuary. I couldn't stop. I wept and wept until I physically couldn't cry anymore tears.

With hindsight, I can look back and know that the Holy Spirit was cleansing me. That was the beginning of my journey.

I began attending the healing service, which to this day is the service I hold dearest in my heart. Church isn't for the perfect. It's a hospital for the broken, the lonely, the wounded, the flawed but beautiful people to join together and be healed, restored and praise God for all that God does for us because He loves so much.

I met Helen who God chose for me to begin my faith journey. She helped me grow in my faith and that has helped me to grow into the person God created me to be. I could go on and on about my healing and faith journey, and about how much St R's means to me. It is a safe haven for me and abounds with the Holy Spirit's peace.

I'll leave you with thought. Healing never ends until we end this earthly life. It's a journey like everything else. Love is a journey also. We are all together in this journey called life. God sent me to St R's to be healed, to know Him more deeply and to heal others, walk in love with others. Thanks be to God for all His gifts!

(there's more to my story – the author knows the rest! 😊)

--Dina Mullins

A View from the Pew

Our Third and Fourth Rectors

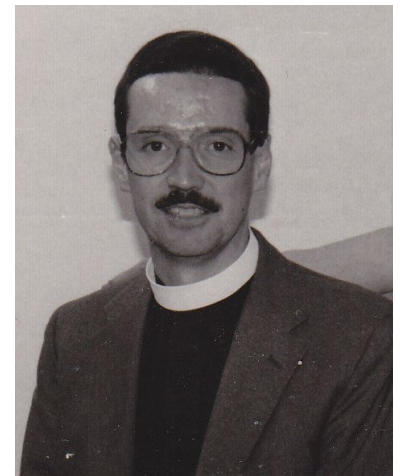
The year after Rev. Summers resigned as rector, Bishop Addison Hosea resigned. Bishop Don Wimberly succeeded him, and a young priest, Joseph Ashby, was called as rector to St. Raphael's. His tenure only lasted about a year. During this time the columbarium and memorial garden were built, a gift from Olive and Humphrey Finney. My favorite memory of Joe is that on my first day at St. Raphael's, in the processional out, he smiled at me. It made me feel welcomed and was part of the reason I came back.



Rev. Ashby

In contrast, the tenure of his successor, Robert Day Matheus, would be the longest since Dr. Page—12 years. After a year with Dr. John Allen as interim, Father Rob was called in 1988. There would be changes. Both he and the new bishop wholeheartedly supported the liturgical changes in the new Prayer Book, the inclusion of women in all aspects of church life including ordination, and the custom of hugging.

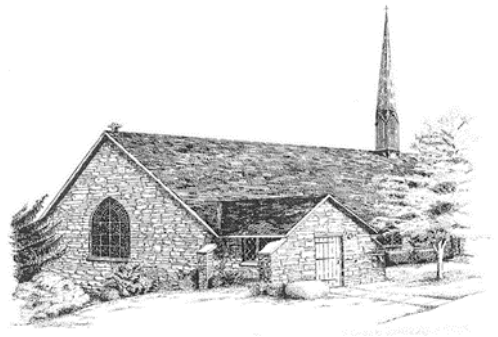
Almost as once Fr. Matheus began the renovation and expansion of the building. If you stand outside and look at the church, you can see a difference between the older, stone part (front left) and the newer building material on the right. In the church, the area around the altar was enlarged and the choir, which had been seated behind the altar, was moved to a new space to the left along with the new pipe organ. The old rose window in the wall above the altar was moved to a new conference room to make space for the organ pipes. Now the altar could be moved forward so a priest could stand behind it facing the people instead of in front of it, with his back to them. An office was added, necessary because for the first time we had a paid secretary. Before, that work had been done by volunteers or by the priest (as I said at the time, if the priest is doing secretarial work, you have an expensive secretary). The Altar Guild now had a large, convenient sacristy instead of a little closet.



Fr. Matheus

There would be other innovations through the years, some that have remained, some not. The Sages group for members over 50 began. Children's chapel was started. A healing service became an essential part of worship. Morning prayer disappeared as a Sunday service. Fr. Matheus and the Bishop were firmly committed to the belief that people need the Eucharist every Sunday. Yet to those who occasionally wanted more extreme changes in liturgical style, Fr. Matheus always said "St. Raphael's has always been a middle-of-the-road church and it will remain one." (Neither too high nor too low.)

--Rose Canon



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