



CLERGY

The Rev. R. Casey Shobe—Rector

The Rev. Erin Jean Warde—Associate Rector for

Christian Formation

The Rev. Shea Gilliland—Curate The Rev. Ginny Kivel—Deacon

The Rev. Terence C. Roper—Rector Emeritus

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Rebecca Gingles—Director of Communications

MUSIC

Joel Martinson—Director of Music and Organist Nicholas Halbert—Organ Scholar Chris Ahrens—Director of Youth Choir Kimberley Ahrens—Director of Children's Choirs

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Sophie Lowrance—Parish Administrator Mary Hall—Controller Meghan Mazur—Executive Assistant to the Rector

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Bracken Reece—Director of Operations Joseph Gerick—Sexton

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Worship Service Times

Wednesday | 6:00 p.m.
Thursday | 12:00 p.m.
Saturday | 5:30 p.m.
Sunday | 9:00 a.m.* and 11:15 a.m.*
*Childcare available for children
6 weeks to age 5.





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Illumine is a quarterly publication of Church of the Transfiguration. The word itself has two meanings: to light up or brighten and to enlighten (someone) spiritually or intellectually. The goal behind this magazine is to tell the stories of this congregation, highlight new ministries, and celebrate where God is at work in our midst.





From the Rector

The Gospel of John

The Rev. R. Casey Shobe, D.Min.

first met the brothers of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist ten years ago. I was a curate at Christ Church Cathedral in Houston, and I led a pilgrimage of young adults to the monastery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for a quiet retreat. I had not previously had much experience with any of the various Episcopal orders of monks and nuns, but this visit felt as much like "coming home" as anything in my life. The guesthouse smelled like some sort of churchy grandparents' house, a mixture of wood polish, soup, and incense. I believe buildings can soak up the prayers offered inside them, and I immediately felt the weight of a century's prayers wrap around me like an old quilt. And still remember hearing for the first time the sound of the brothers chanting the psalms and harmonious unaccompanied singing. It was heaven.



Icon of the Beloved Disciple

In the basement of the guesthouse there is a small, very plain chapel that the brothers use for their daily meetings. In lieu of an altar, they typically place an icon at the center of the room, and guests are permitted to visit for prayer and devotion almost any hour. During the time of our retreat, the icon the brothers had on display was, fittingly, that of the Beloved Disciple. Though he is unnamed, tradition holds that the one referred to as the "beloved disciple" in John's gospel is none other than John himself. This icon features the moment at the Last Supper when John reclines against Jesus. A boyish looking John is pressed gently against his Lord, his eyes looking downward in humility and rest, while Jesus raises his hand to bless him.

I stood in front of the icon for what may have been an hour, utterly transfixed, and eventually I realized that tears were streaming down my face. Somehow, up to that moment, I had never considered the intimacy with Jesus enjoyed by John in this moment, or realized how much I yearned for it in my own life. I was overwhelmed by the desire to be in his place, to feel the warmth of Jesus' body, to receive the tenderness of his touch, to be *near* him. The icon helped me pray in an entirely new way, as though I was in the place of the beloved disciple, holding on to Jesus with longing and love.

It is no coincidence that the brothers of SSJE would have that particular icon on display. As it says in The Rule of the Society, "The image of the trusted friend lying close to the breast of Jesus is an icon of the relationship we enjoy with the Son of God through prayer. It is by being close to him that we are reunited with the Father, for Jesus is 'God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart." The image is an icon of the power of the whole of the Gospel of John, with its invitation to experience the eternal identity of the Word, who was in the beginning and through whom all things came into being, and who became so very human that he wept for his friend Lazarus.

This Lent, we have invited everyone to participate in a study of the Gospel of John, which was created by the brothers of SSJE. It is my hope that this season of prayer and reflection on John's gospel will help you come to understand your place at Jesus' side, just like the beloved disciple. Some have argued that's why the beloved disciple is never actually named, because we are each meant to find ourselves in the role of "one whom Jesus loves," intimately leaning against Jesus (13:23), standing steadfast at the foot of the cross (19:26), witnessing to the resurrection (20:2–4), and recognizing the Lord when he shows up in surprising places (21:7).

So dive deeply into the richness of John's gospel, and renew your faith through the story of the Word made flesh, love incarnate. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." \(\vec{\psi} \)



Ministry Spotlight

Your Endowment Fund

Help us grow The Church of the Transfiguration Endowment Fund as we celebrate its 40 years of existence.

By Marge Montgomery

Transfiguration's Endowment Fund was established on January 21, 1978, and has grown to (almost) \$1.4 million in value. The long range goals set by the Vestry include an ambitious value of \$4 million by 2026, tripling our current value. Working together, we can achieve this. Why is this important, what have we done so far, and how can this be accomplished?

Why is it important?

The Fund was created to serve as a vehicle for the development

of a pool of capital large enough to protect the church in any emergency. The Fund's primary mission continues to operate as a charitable trust for the benefit of Transfiguration. Income from the fund may be expended only on the church or in furtherance of religious, charitable and educational purposes. These funds are available for all of the needs of the church, including capital maintenance, outreach, youth, music and all the church's ministries.

What have we done so far?

As an example, the following grants were requested and made for 2017:

- \$45,000 to assist with capital maintenance of the existing church. The need for operational maintenance, cleaning and grounds keeping of our 60,000 square feet of space has far outpaced our budgeted funds available. There are areas of critical needs, yet we are still far short of what is recommended.
- \$7,000 to Gateway of Grace (Outreach). This provided emergency rent payment for several families, including a mother with five children, whose husband was kidnapped by ISIS. This woman is now a part of Gateway Community, as a Christian, and her children are in Christian based schools.





• \$1,500 to Hurricane Harvey relief efforts (Outreach). This was a direct and timely support in the form of supplies for the trailers taken by Transfiguration members to the location.

In the past, other grants from the Endowment Fund have supported the library move and renovation, debt associated with the South Building's construction, and the Wayfinding project.

How does it work?

The Endowment Board meets monthly on the second Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. There are nine trustees, who serve terms that expire in staggering years. Three serve as officers. Jay Madrid serves as legal advisor, and has no voting privileges. The Vestry appoints a member to serve as liaison. New trustees are approved by the Vestry at the beginning of each year, and are installed at the Annual Parish meeting held in January.

The Endowment Fund is actually made up of several funds, which have some differences in their structure and purpose:

- Legacy Fund—this is the main fund, with the majority of the assets
- Outreach Fund—to support outreach requests
- The Joanna Elizabeth Pierce and Justin Ford Pierce Fund for Youth Services—established by a gift in thanksgiving by their father, Jeffrey D. Pierce
- Music Fund—our newest fund, established at the end of 2017 to support the music ministries

The spend limit of any fund is 5% of the total assets. These funds are disbursed through grant application processes each year. The funds are managed in partnership with Westwood Trust.

How do we accomplish our goal—to triple our Endowment Fund assets by 2026?

Prayerfully consider how you can help Transfiguration in the future, and/ or support specific ministries and needs of our church. One of the best ways is to join **The Legacy Society**, which honors those whose estate plans or wills include gifts designated for the long-term benefit of the

church. Every gift is important and any amount helps ensure the legacy of Transfiguration for generations to come.

There are so many ways to make donations, perhaps in ways you have not considered:

- Cash
- Appreciated property, such as securities, real estate, jewelry, or art
- Life insurance
- Bequest in a will
- Columbarium (the fee for the right of interment in the Columbarium is a contribution to the Endowment Fund)

Events are planned during 2018 to make the Endowment Fund known, gain a wider understanding of why we need it and what services can be enhanced, and to move towards that \$4 million goal.

If you have any questions, would like more information, or are just curious about anything related to our Endowment Fund, please contact Marge Montgomery at marge.montgomery@sbcglobal.net, or any of the other trustees listed. \center{Y}

Please note, the trustees do not make financial recommendations. Those questions are best answered by your personal financial advisor.

Current Trustees

(with year of term expiration)

Mikkel Bassett (2018)—immediate past president Sue Gray (2019)—president Bill Evans (2019)—treasurer Bill Edwards (2019) Marge Montgomery (2020)—secretary

Suzy Rickard (2020)

Linda Ayres (2020)

David Cordell (2021)

John Mottram (2021)





AN INTERVIEW WITH

Ellen Dingwall

llen Dingwall retired from the staff as Minister for Congregational Life and Outreach on Ash Wednesday after nearly 20 years of service under three rectors at

Transfiguration. During her tenure, Ellen has worked in a variety of ministry areas. Most

know her as our "chief welcomer," the one who warmly greeted them at the door on their very first visit. She also developed a skill for connecting them with new friends and ministries, something that became known as



"Dingwalling." Numerous people have shared stories of how Ellen helped them quickly feel like Transfiguration could be their church home. Ellen has also been passionate about outreach. One of her greatest legacies is the launch of our Food Distribution Ministry three years ago, which she has led along with Judy Drotman and Alan Justice (read an update about the Food Pantry on page 8).

Today, that ministry provides substantial groceries to 25 families totaling nearly 100 people every month, but for Ellen, it's always been about much more than food. Just as she did on Sunday mornings, she knows all the food pantry clients by name, asks after their

families, and generously doles out hugs. Ellen has helped this ministry be an expression of God's love.

We celebrated her ministry on Sunday, February 4 with a reception between services.

What follows is an interview about her time on staff and what she has learned.

1. How long have you been at Transfiguration and how did you come to be here?

After moving to Plano and desperately searching for an Episcopal Church like the one I had known growing up in my hometown of St. Louis, MO, my brother suggested I visit Transfiguration. He knows JD and felt I would be comfortable with Transfiguration's liturgy and music. My daughter and I visited in January of 1991 and I never left.

2. Tell us about your ministry through the years and how your role has changed over time.

Not long after we joined the church I met Phyl Kerrigan who had a passion for evangelism and welcoming ministries, (and still does).

She encouraged me to work with her to create a "welcome center" in the Narthex. This was long before any of the building additions were made to the church nor did we have the baptismal font in the center of the narthex, but needless to say, our space was still very limited. We fashioned a welcome sign and put it on a card table. That was the beginning of our concentrated effort to become a more welcoming and friendly parish. From that simple beginning in the narthex our next step was to form an evangelism committee. A group of us began meeting and studying ways for Transfiguration to become the most welcoming church in the Diocese of Dallas. Mother Barbara Kelton was our staff liaison and helped us brainstorm ways to reach out into the community and beyond taking with us our newly formed mission statement that said we strive to "Seek and Serve Christ in ALL persons." Mother Kelton moved on to pastor another parish so in the summer of 1996 Father Roper and Father Godwin asked if I would join the staff as Director of Evangelism on a very part time basis to help fill some of the void left by Mother Kelton's departure. Thanks to the advice of Father Court Moore, my title was quickly changed to Director of Congregational Development. After Father Godwin was called to be rector of Transfiguration in 2001, he hired me to work full time and to expand my role on the staff to include outside communication, facilitate the design of our first website, and start a special

events ministry which we eventually called The Vision Forum, among lots of other "duties as assigned!"

3. What are a few of your favorite things about serving in this parish?

The wonderful people of Transfiguration and the spirit of love and acceptance for all people exhibited by this church family are just two things that have brought me joy and fulfillment everyday for the last 20 years. Welcoming visitors and newcomers, bringing them into the parish and helping them find their place in this community of faith have also been some of my greatest joys.

4. What are a few of the programs, ministries, and/or events you're most proud of looking back over your career?

I am so proud of all of the talented and gifted people I have had the privilege of working with but I can't help thinking that the formation of the Vision Forum and the many famous and notable speakers it brought to the community are accomplishments that I am equally proud of. Also, helping to create Fig Fest as a gift to the congregation was so rewarding. It served to bring us all together to celebrate each other and our beloved community for no other purpose than to find joy together as a church family.



5. What are some of your most memorable moments in ministry (that you're at liberty to share)?

There have been so many memorable moments these past 20 years that I couldn't begin to list them all but the one that stands out more than any other was being able to spend time with Archbishop Desmond Tutu when he visited us in 2006 to help us celebrate our 50th anniversary. I have a personal photo of the two of us together which I cherish.

6. Any funny stories?

There have been lots of funny things that have happened over the course of these years but no one incident stands out, (at least not one I can talk about!)

7. Any words of wisdom to share with us?

I know Transfiguration will grow and thrive as it continues to live by its mission to "Seek and Serve Christ in ALL persons." I pray that this community never loses its focus on its mission and will continue to open its heart to all who come here seeking a deeper relationship with Christ and with their neighbors.

PHOTOS BY JOHN MAKOWSKI AND ROBERT HACKER



Building Community

Transfiguration's Food Pantry

Serving the food pantry gives me a sense of community. Not just with my fellow volunteers, but with the families whom we help. The ultimate way to create community is through service."

—Parishioner Mark Ramsay

By Alan Justice

ransfiguration, like many Episcopal churches, is a relatively affluent community. We are in North Dallas where homes near the church regularly sell for very high prices. Yet, within walking distance of our church, there are neighborhoods where people don't have enough to eat, where children go to school hungry. For years now, we have partnered with Spring Valley Elementary School (SVE) at the corner of Meandering Way and Spring Grove. Few white children attend Spring Valley; the school population is largely Hispanic.

When we began the food pantry in 2015, our initial clients were families from SVE, recruited by the school counselors, who knew which families were most in need. As parishioner Annette Randall says,

In the beginning of the pantry it was so heartwarming to work with the Spring Valley staff in getting information to the qualified, potential clients. We saw them come at first with apprehension on how they would be treated and served. As the program developed we saw them relax and be so grateful. I recall how happy we were to receive tortillas and snacks as a thank you, plus many hugs and smiles that have grown through the years. The Parish should be very proud of this endeavor. I sure am.

We started with four families. Today, we serve twenty-seven, which include ninety-three individuals. Sometimes, a family drops out when the breadwinner finds a job—that's good news of the best kind!

Annette's comment points out something important—our relationship with the clients goes both ways. They often bring us home-cooked food to show their gratitude. There are lots of hugs and smiles on food pickup day (always the third Monday of the month). The folks served by the pantry are not merely clients. They are all people with dignity, people with their own stories and life experiences.

One family lost an adult son in a traffic accident. They were devastated with shock and grief. We saw that initial reaction, and we also saw them slowly begin to heal over the following months. In many small



ways, our pantry volunteers helped that healing to take place. There were extra hugs and conversations, tokens of care and love, and doing what it is that Christians are supposed to do, to care for the hurting and broken.

Not every volunteer, of course, has the privilege to work directly with the families. Stephen Matthews and Matt Harms have been instrumental in getting the food from our pickup point at Crossroads Community Services downtown up to the church. Robert Hacker seems to be at the center of everything that happens; wherever there is a task that needs doing, you'll find Robert.

Jodi Dalton and John Makowski are both born organizers. Jodi, at right in the lower photo, says,

I prefer the behind-the-scenes stuff and organizing things, so the early afternoon process of sorting what we get from Crossroads and picking the orders for the various families suits me well. I really love getting to spend the time with the other volunteers, some of whom I see regularly, some just this one time a month, and some who have become friends because of this shared mission.

"I find great satisfaction," Jodi continues, "in transforming a truck load or two of food into a grocery order for an individual family."

Our clients also appreciate the non-food items given by our parishioners. Toothpaste, toilet paper, paper towels, diapers, shampoo, soap, antiseptic, hygiene products, conditioner—all are expensive, and take a big bite out of a family budget. Periodically, we ask church members for donations, and they respond generously.

The Clothes Horse has become an important part of this food ministry. Folks who can't afford enough food can always use free clothing. The Clothes Horse opens when our clients come to pick up their groceries and helps with items for kids and adults. We started off in the Niles Building, but now share space with the Clothes Horse.

Everyone has different talents, and all of those get used in the process of registering new families, getting the food to the Fig, setting up the work area, sorting the food, turning it into bags of groceries for individual families, greeting those families and helping them load their cars, getting the trash and recycling out to the dumpsters, and finally cleaning up and returning the work space to its original condition.

Parishioner David Monk agrees: "Getting to know and work alongside our volunteers has been very rewarding. Our church has a large number of dedicated volunteers working at the pantry. It has been my honor and pleasure getting to know them and work alongside them. We do so as our way of giving back for the many gifts we have received."

Nancy Banitch, who faithfully sorts and packs groceries, says,

Helping out at the food pantry is one of my favorite activities at church. I love being a part of this wonderful group of parishioners who give of their time each month in order to provide food and clothing to local families in need of assistance. I am very grateful personally for the opportunity that the food pantry offers to 'seek and serve Christ in all persons.' In small tasks, such as sorting produce or filling grocery bags, we are helping those families who are struggling to make ends meet, and are spreading the love of Christ in our wider community.

None of this would be happening without the dedicated efforts of Ellen Dingwall and Judy Drotman. Both were instrumental in creating the ministry.

One of the attributes of our volunteers is faithfulness. Most of the work is broken out in two-hour shifts—delivering and unloading the food, sorting it, "picking" the groceries, and helping the clients when they come to pick up their supplies. The pantry supplies enough food for a week for each person in the family. It's not a replacement for their food, but a supplement. The volunteers come back, month after month, and share a fellowship that can only be found in service to others.

Judy, our "fearless leader," reminds us "how consistently grateful our clients have been and how generous they are to bring a snack or treat for us from time to time. It has been an unexpected surprise."

One of our clients, a single mom, gave us a thank you note at Thanksgiving in 2016, and it sticks with me to this day. Her note was in Spanish, so here is a translation:

I'm writing this note to thank each and every one of you for your efforts, your care and dedication in helping those who need it. A thousand thanks. I personally have been a widow for ten years, and I am struggling hard raise my children, but I also believe that it would not be as easy without persons like you. Truly, a thousand thanks, and may you have a happy Thanksgiving Day.





A Sampling of Lenten/Easter Reading in the Bookstore:

Bookstore Corner



Adult

Easter Stories—classic tales for the holy season

Under the Fig Tree—a little art book—words and images open the imagination for a spiritual journey

Ashes and the Phoenix—meditations exploring the evolution, symbols, sights, and sounds of Lent

Dust Bunnies in the Basket—akeen observations and a clever wit connect dust bunnies and egg hunts to foot washing and the Easter Vigil

Lent is Not Rocket Science—an exploration of God, creation, and the cosmos

The Soul's Journey—an artist's approach to Stations of the Cross—images, stories, and prayers including devotions from leaders in the Episcopal Church.

Children and Family

My Very First Easter Story—a "sticker" book Live Lent at Home—daily prayers and activities The Easter Story—extraordinary! as only Brian Wildsmith can

What We Do in Lent—an activity book

Come visit us in the Kay Andrews Bookstore, open Tuesday–Friday from 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. and weekends before and after all services. Credit cards are accepted Thursday and Sunday. All proceeds from sales benefit ministries of the church through grants from St. Hilda's Guild.



A Ministry of Presence

Eucharistic Visitors

By The Rev. Ginny Kivel

"The body of Christ, the bread of heaven. The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation."

ost of us hear those words every Sunday as we receive the body and blood of our Lord from the hands of a brother or sister during a service of Holy Eucharist. A priest, a deacon, or a Eucharistic Minister shares a moment with us in Holy Communion.

When I began attending Transfiguration about eight years ago, I wanted to serve and I started looking for a ministry. I wasn't feeling called to anything in particular, but I was raised by parents who said, "If you believe, you will serve." For them it was a simple as that. On Rally Day, I saw the Eucharistic Ministers' table and decided to sign up to participate. I had been receiving the cup from Eucharistic Ministers on Sunday, and I thought I could be a regular, faithful part of worship that way. The first time I administered communion to a child, I was so moved I cried (I don't recommend that as a regular practice!).

I was a Eucharistic Minister for at least a year before I felt a calling to take communion to people at home or in the hospital. When I joined Transfiguration, I had been gone from the church for a long time. When I left, we used the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer*, in which the only activity a layperson could do was read the Epistle. Even the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* said that bishops, priests and deacons provided Holy Communion to sick or shut-in members. Lay people were allowed to read the Epistle and to be "chalice bearers." A provision made in 2003



created Licensed Eucharistic Visitors (EVs), another ministry that offers the body and blood of our Lord and the ministry of presence. For me, becoming an EV required some training and a few ride-alongs with people who had been doing it for a while. Alan and Mary Ellen Horan took me with them for a visit, which gave me the confidence I needed to represent the body of Christ, and brought me great joy.

Eucharistic Visitors are lay people who have participated in the Eucharist, or *Thanksgiving*, and volunteer to extend the blessings of that Holy Communion to distant members of our body of Christ. Members who are shut-in or suffer extended illness, or even short bouts of sickness feel cut off from the rest of the body of Christ. While their church is celebrating the Great Thanksgiving, they are in a different physical space without the companionship of community and the blessing of Christ's Body and Blood. In this ministry, those who are visited in their homes become physically included in the service that just concluded. In essence, EVs extend the service in both time and space to incorporate the missing members of the congregation.

Eucharistic Visitors also feed the Lord as they visit their brothers and sisters. In Matthew 25: 35–36, Jesus talks about the judgment. He says to one group of people, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me... as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." In a document provided by the Diocese of Albany, potential EVs are told,

You will already have been nurtured and renewed through your participation at the Eucharist, and will be sent forth by the Church with the Blessed Sacrament. God will be using you as a "Christbearer" to connect those whom you are visiting with the larger corporate Body of Christ, not only in your church, but (also) in the whole Communion of Saints, past, present, and future. When we meet with a home-bound parishioner, we often think that we are "visiting from the Church"—and of course the sick person being visited is very aware of being "away from" and not part of the parish for Sunday Eucharist. But, from a theological standpoint, it is more correct to say that when you, as a Eucharistic Visitor meet with a homebound parishioner, you [pl.] are the Church. Jesus told His disciples "when two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

[Matthew 18:19]

We all, together, in the breaking of the bread and sharing of the cup, participate with the whole church in a sacred moment.

EVs also minister from the Word of God. They read the Gospel with the people they are visiting, they say the psalm, and, having taken good notes, they communicate the main points of the sermon. If there are family members or other visitors, they may participate in the service, reading scripture or sharing in the psalm. In nursing homes or senior living facilities, the nurses and other caregivers along with other residents may join in the service.

EVs focus on the sick or homebound person and let them know that they are valued and missed. People who have received such a visit regularly report that they are grateful to be remembered by their community. They cherish the ministry of presence and that someone is with them and listening to them. They appreciate the prayers, the communion, and the presence of the visitors. When I call people to set up the visits for the coming Sunday, I often hear from those I call about how terrific





their visitor was the previous week.

I would encourage anyone who is interested in sharing in this ministry to contact me to schedule a ride-along to see for yourself the joy that EVs bring each week. I invite you to consider making a less than monthly commitment on your own or with your family to, "go in peace to love and serve the Lord." In fact, the other reports I hear about weekly visits is that the EVs are the ones who are most blessed by our far-flung members and friends. \P

Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John

By The Rev. Erin Jean Warde

hile monastic communities might seem very Roman

Catholic, it is important for us to remember that monastic communities are also an active part of our Anglican/Episcopal tradition.

According to the Episcopal Church's website,



"The Episcopal Church canonically recognizes 18 traditional orders and 14 Christian communities for men, women, or both. Religious Orders and Communities serve the greater church in several ways. Many offer retreat houses and individual spiritual direction. Each community has a rule of life and is committed to prayer, life in community, and hospitality." Read more: [https://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/religious-orders-and-faith-communities]

On March 17–18, Transfiguration will welcome Br. Keith Nelson from the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE). Br. Keith will visit, giving us the chance to learn more about what life is like as a part of one

of these deep spiritual communities. While here, he will lead a half day retreat exploring the various dimensions of the Gospel of John, and he will preach at our Saturday and Sunday services. This is one part of our greater Lenten program, *Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John*, which was designed by SSJE and the Center for the Ministry of Teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary.



At Transfiguration, we will participate in this study as a parish wide Lenten discipline. Our program includes daily reflections from SSJE on the gospel of John, journals for everyone in the church, two guest speakers, sermons focused on the gospel of John and 1 John, and the opportunity to join a small group for weekly reflection and prayer.

In Br. Keith's own words,

"Monastics throughout the centuries have heartily commended reading and praying with John's gospel as a sure path to intimacy with God in Jesus. They have found in its pages a central source of inspiration in seeking and discovering a life of mystical union with Christ, realizing by way of their monastic call the birthright of all Christians by our baptism. There is something more deeply, instinctually, intuitively transformative about John the longer I travel this monastic way. Why is this so? At its heart, monastic life is just the ordinary Christian life lived within a very particular frame, according to a distinctive rhythm, and under vows. But that

Continued on next page

Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John

Continued from previous page

frame, that rhythm, and those vows are designed to saturate the monastic mind, heart, and will with the Life and Light of Christ, to the degree that something extraordinary begins to suffuse and transfigure the ordinary. Everyday occurrences, objects, and interactions speak a living Word that, over time, become the nouns and verbs of a language. Likewise, at the heart of John's gospel we find Jesus continually stepping into similarly ordinary interactions and handling ordinary objects, but in doing so, transforming them into signs that reveal the truth of who Jesus is and who we are becoming in him. The powerful, experiential truth I glimpsed in my first encounter with SSJE—through participation in the Eucharist—was a moment of glory revealed by a sign in this Johannine sense." Read more [https://www.ssje.org/2017/10/03/behold-what-you-are-seeing-jesus-ourselves-in-the-gospel-according-to-john]

John's gospel happens to be my favorite, as we meet Jesus in the cosmic and the ordinary. Jesus shows up as being the Word—from before time, and for ever—but Jesus also shows up in simple ingredients like wine and bread. John's gospel brings together both the mundane and the magnificent, in a way that reinforces the love of mysterious dichotomy that is so embraced in the Episcopal Church. After reading the words of Br. Keith, I wonder if the monastic communities in our tradition simply mirror that mysterious dichotomy in John, as they dedicate their lives to the magnificent act of profound prayer, while also taking those prayers into the mundane acts of daily life.

I have never been much of a structured person. My desk is always messy, I don't have daily chores, and I sometimes forget meals. I want to be that person, but I struggle with order in most parts of my life. Some people are naturally set toward structure and habit, and I feel naturally set toward *wanting* structure and habit, but I struggle to maintain it. That might be why I stand in so much awe of people like Br. Keith who have so directly ordered their lives, not just generally, but more

specifically toward worship.

Priests make vows to pray daily, and to read Scripture, but this vow is not intended only for priests and monks. The same vows are in our baptismal covenant, as the baptized vow "to continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers." And yet, we also recognize that we will sin,



and fall short of even the vows we take at our baptism. Before we know it, we might find ourselves ruled more by Google Calendars than prayer, even if we desperately want that to be different. But when we stray from that order, we should take heart, knowing that we can always get back into a life ordered by prayer and reading Holy Scripture. If ever we feel prodigal, we should remember how the father greets his child.

While I believe Jesus is often made known to us in the spontaneity of life, we are still called to that greater sense of being ordered by daily prayer and reading the Bible. I hope that, through *Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John* this Lent, I can get back into a life intentionally ordered by prayer and reading Holy Scripture. Through this study together, I believe we will be reminded of how to better order our days toward Holy Scripture and prayer. I know this will only be enhanced as we learn from Br. Keith, who will share the wisdom he has gathered through monastic life. Though I do not know how God might challenge and change me through this study, I do know that challenge and change are inevitable. I know this because the Bible is the living Word, and when we dedicate our time to its story, it inevitably acts on our own stories in an everlasting way.

The Society of St. John the Evangelist

SSJE is a community of men who give their whole selves over to living the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Rooted in the ancient monastic traditions of prayer and community life, and critically engaged with contemporary culture, they seek to know and share an authentic experience of God's love and mercy. They live a common life shaped by worship, prayer, and a Rule of Life.

SSJE was founded in the parish of Cowley in Oxford, England, by the Reverend Richard Meux Benson in 1866. SSJE was the first stable religious community of men to be established in the Anglican Church since the Reformation. The order came to Boston in 1870. For many years SSJE also had houses in Scotland, India, South Africa, Japan and Canada. Now, the Brothers of the North American Congregation live at the Monastery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, near Harvard Square, and also keep a rural retreat center, Emery House, in West Newbury, Massachusetts. The Brothers live under a Rule of Life and, at profession, make vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience.





On Retreating

By Rebecca Gingles

"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known."

—1 Corinthians 13:12

he first time I remember going on a retreat I was in eighth grade. Along with a band of junior high students from my mid-sized northeastern United Methodist Church, I found myself on a weekend getaway in the Pocono Mountains. The time away together was intended to help us contemplate why we believed what we did, how to make our faith our own rather than a thing handed down by our parents and, of course, to bond as a group. On the final evening we set off for a nighttime trek through the woods. Excited at the prospect of seeing the tall trees rustling in the moonlight, I was quickly disappointed as we were all blindfolded and asked to hold onto a long rope for our trek. Together,

hands grasping the scratchy lifeline, we twelve sight-restricted teenagers stumbled forward through the dark forest, our feet crunching through fallen leaves. With only the paltry light of the crescent moon, my church pastor led us up a steeper incline than seemed wise given the fallen logs and sinkholes along the path. This "trust walk" during my preparations for confirmation still strikes me as an extreme way to illustrate having faith in God and provision through community, but it certainly was memorable!

Raised in the United Methodist Church by a pastor and faithful choir member layman, I grew up attending church weekly, participating in choirs, potluck suppers, Advent festivals, and Easter celebrations. Annual retreats were also part of the fabric of my spiritual life and growth.

When I moved to Texas in high school I went on twice-annual retreats with my UMC church youth group. (While there were fortunately no more trust walks, a friend of mine did get accidentally clotheslined during a late-night game of capture the flag...). As the new kid in school and at church, this time away provided a condensed period of bonding time. Because of games, group prayers, and reflecting on topics like spiritual gifts, I quickly got to know others and others got to know me. New friends remembered my lifelong fear of clowns, developing faith, and love of singing when life returned to regular patterns of homework, routine rehearsals, and weekly church services.

As Christians, we mark time through our liturgical calendar, through high seasons and low as the months of each year march along. Retreats,

as they've continued throughout my young adult and now adult life, with the SMU Wesley Foundation, or in my brief stint as a youth pastor, or as a member of a small, emergent church, have presented themselves as times for me to step outside of my routines, both in prayer or daily living, to reconnect with God out of my usual context.

It is always a gift to see the dynamics of a large-group gathering move from awkward side talk between friends to a growing sense of togetherness through the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is not just the deepened sense of community that captures my attention, though, but the setting. On these retreats, away from traffic, grocery lists, laundry, and obligations, I become more attuned to the call of the birds and

the lakeside calls of cicadas and frogs, of fish splashing in the early morning light. In a different physical space it became easier to listen for God and to be thankful for his creation. It becomes easier to see him in the face of others.

I have found over the years as I attend church that there comes a tipping point where it is uncomfortable to ask for someone's name after you've been sitting in the row in front of him/her and passing the peace every week for months. Or a point

where the familiarity of seeing a person's face every week mistakenly signals to us that we *know* them. In a church the size of Transfiguration, it can be hard to get to know people deeply by sharing pews or the communion rail, or sitting in classes next to one another. That is why I am excited that Transfiguration is creating a new tradition this year—one that welcomes in long-time members and those whose faces are just becoming recognizable—the Congregational Retreat. When we leave the comfort of the Tower Cloister or Sanctuary, we are all on equal footing in the woods—slightly out of place, but together.

I've worked in and been around quite a few churches, and can attest that Transfiguration is a truly wonderful place. As further proof of this, I will always regret that I do not get to be a member of this loving, open, storied congregation—that my kids will not get to attend services specifically designed for them to understand the key moments of our faith, that I don't get to come to hear Roy Heller open my eyes to the Hebrew Scriptures on a weekly basis, or that I miss attending Evensongs

Continued on next page



On Retreating

Continued from previous page

sung by this angelic choir. Especially that I don't get a weekend away to get to know all of you better.

The good news? *You* are here. So, be seen. Become known. Step out of your city for a few days and make the trek to Camp Allen. Sleep in a bunk bed or motel-style room, share a communal bathroom and brush your teeth next to people you've only seen in their Sunday best. Walk through the woods, eat camp food, and roast marshmallows. Meet God in a new friend through an encouraging conversation, over a board game, or down by the lake. Come home smelling of campfire, refreshed.

Life can sometimes feel like my eighth grade confirmation trust walk—fumbling through the dark, clinging to a rope, hoping the person in front of you remembers you're back there. Blindly walking up a mountain for a hopeful glimpse of the God of love whom we profess to place our trust in. Wondering if the cloud of grief or loss or apathy or anger or stress that is weighing us down too much to finish the climb.

This April, imagine holding onto a rope in the dim light, following your friends and pew mates through unknown footfalls of the future, blessing one another and climbing up toward God. \(\vec{\psi}\)

The Power of Blessing: April 27-29

Retreat Details:

Join us for a parish-wide retreat at Camp Allen the **weekend** of April 27–29. There will be activities and programming for both children and adults, and plenty of down time, recreational opportunities, and fellowship gatherings. This is a great time to get away in nature and get to know people at Transfiguration better.

Topic and Speaker:

The retreat speaker on Saturday and Sunday will be Danielle Shroyer on the topic *The Power of Blessing*. In a world rife with conflict and noise, blessing invites us into a space of love, grace, and faithful presence. Though blessing begins with God, we are given a divine call to bless those around us in thought, word, and deed. Through prayer, ritual, and



story, this retreat will offer an opportunity to rest in blessing, and to send blessing out into a grace-parched world.

About Camp Allen:

Established in 1921 by the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, Camp Allen is a modern, year-round facility located one hour northwest of Houston near Navasota, Texas. Camp Allen accommodates a variety of spiritual, social, corporate, and educational events for all ages. The 1,100 acres of piney woods features two lakes, miles of trails, and much more.

Accommodations:

There will be two options for accommodations at Camp Allen:

- Campsite Bunk Accommodations—Campsite 3A is comprised of 2 sections of "dormitory" style bunk beds and communal bathrooms. These sections will be separated by gender, and are equipped with AC, covered outdoor meeting space, a kitchen, and dining room.
- Private Room Accommodations—Camp Allen offers doubleoccupancy hotel-style rooms in their conference center, including WiFi, coffee pots, and 7 handicapped accessible rooms and 5 suites. These come with a private bathroom, and do not need to be divided by gender. Parishioners staying here would join us at the campsite for meals and activities.

Pricing:

- Adult—Campsite Bunk Accommodations—\$100.00
- Adult—Private Room Accommodations—\$160.00
- Child (3–17)—Campsite Bunk Accommodations—\$50.00
- Child (3–17)—Private Room Accommodations—\$75.00
- Infant (0-2)—Free

Included Activities:

- Basketball
- Nature Trails
- Horseshoes
- Disc Golf Course
- Campfire w/s'mores
- Fishing
- Hike & Bike Trails
- Playground
- Volleyball
- Hayride

*Other activities such as canoeing, kayaking and archery available for an additional fee.



Why Transfiguration?

Mark Ramsay

I think my time at Transfiguration has helped me listen to, learn from, and respect the tribes we serve, understanding there is strength within groups where diversity of backgrounds, culture, skills, experience, and beliefs are included."

Transfiguration?" often. Brian and I live in the Oak Lawn neighborhood of Dallas, a mere three miles from downtown Dallas. Oak Lawn is a neighborhood that is a diverse, thriving, and—yes—spiritual community! Many of our friends attend churches in and nearer Oak Lawn, and these churches do a wonderful job of providing a safe haven to the LGBTQ population in Oak Lawn so that they may heal from past religious trauma and grow towards a closer relationship with God.

So, why would we trek the 12 miles to North Dallas to be a part of the Transfiguration community? Simply put: friendship, family, and a mature understanding of the calling of Christ that is demonstrated repeatedly at Transfiguration.

I come from a Southern Baptist background, and by the time I was in college I had "thrown the baby out with the bathwater" when it came to my belief in Christ. I had been taught that my same-sex attraction was an abomination (no matter whether I were monogamous or not), that this was "not the plan God intended", and that I "wasn't trying hard enough." Thankfully, with confidence of self-knowledge, I had the wherewithal to reject that premise. Regrettably, however, I lumped ALL Christianity in with this brand of spiritual immaturity that I had been taught, and never sought clarification or a deeper understanding. In fact, I developed resentment towards Christianity as I understood it. And, over the years, I had pulled away from my non-supportive family, regrettably lumping them all together as non-affirming, as well. There was brief inspiration to rejoin the faith back in 2004, when I actually became confirmed at The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, but the Sunday of my confirmation was the last time I attended. The resentment returned.

That is... until I met fellow parishioner Trey Bounds. Trey patiently and lovingly suggested back in 2014 that we get together for breakfast once a week and read a book together, a book that he felt could open the door of reconciliation just a crack. The book was Brennan Manning's *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. Over the course of the next two years, we



Mark Ramsay, new co-coordinator for the Open Door Fellowship and his husband, Brian Corkins.

read that book and others, and I was exposed to the likes of Rachel Held Evans, Nadia Bolz-Weber, and Shane Claiborne; all progressive Christians who saw the LGBTQ community as children of God just as they are, whole and complete. Then, with my resentment softened, in the fall of 2016 Trey invited me to a service at his then-new parish, Transfiguration.

From the moment I walked in (after briefly being "Dingwalled!"), I unexpectedly ran into my cousin, Shaun Manning. I said, "What are YOU doing here?" to which he replied, "This is my church! And, my parents' church, too!" I was flabbergasted: here were relatives that I had "forgotten about"; relatives that were members of this church Trey had insisted were affirming. And, after one service, I felt completely at home. It had been 12 years since I had been to a liturgical service and I could see with new eyes that the proceedings, the lack of prominence or importance given any one human involved in leading worship, and the involvement of the congregation convinced me that this church was truly seeking the purpose of church: not to worship any pastor, doctrine, or oft-misinterpreted book, but to communally worship Christ.

The next Sunday I invited Brian (whose background is Lutheran) to join me, and we've just... kept coming. My aunt and uncle, Sally and E.T. Manning encouraged us to join a Foyer Group, and we were immediately exposed to older, heterosexual couples who thought nothing of our relationship. Such a statement may seem odd to the reader, but in Dallas, TX—for a Southern Baptist boy whose relationship was rejected by his immediate family for professed "religious" reasons—this was monumental. Since then, we've become involved in the Food Pantry, we've come to know and love our "pew mates" Minnie, Annette, Lawson and Eloise, Paul and Pam, to name a few, and to have gotten to know so many other parishioners through our two rounds in Foyer Groups, through Adult Formation classes, St. Elizabeth's Guild potluck dinners, and Open Door Fellowship

No church is perfect, we know. But, because we as a church strive to truly "Seek and serve Christ in ALL persons," Transfiguration is our home! \P



Holy Week Reflections from the Gallery

oly Week—from Palm Sunday through Easter Day—is the most important, as well as the busiest time in the life of a church

services of the week with a good deal of thought, planning, and preparation, and make every attempt to have the central themes of the liturgies be readily apparent in order to speak to the worshipper in profound ways. I love taking out the treasures of the church during this week—ancient plainsong chants, Renaissance and Tudor polyphony, Bach chorales, American folk hymnody, African-American Spirituals, and hymns and anthems of the present day. I am nearly always moved

musician. At Transfiguration we celebrate each of the principal foretaste of heaven and the feast to come. by something different each year, often by something truly serendipitous

and unplanned. I will never forget one celebration of the Good Friday liturgy on a sunny spring afternoon while I was director of music at Saint Rita Catholic Community. During the hymns sung at the Veneration of the Cross, just as we got to the phrase "Were you there when the sun refused to shine?" the skies grew dark, and it was if we had a glimpse of that first Good Friday and God's own grief at his Son's dying on the cross. There have been so many times over these past 13 years I have been your director of music here at Transfiguration, when I have experienced God's presence through the act of worship and was given a

I always end each Holy Week amazed at the dedication of the members of the Transfiguration Choir, as well as other liturgical ministers, and those in the congregation who make the commitment to be together during these holy days, watching and praying, as Christians have done for over two thousand years. It is my hope that the reflections which follow from members of the Transfiguration Choir will give you an insight to the riches available to you by walking the way of Jesus throughout the liturgies of Holy Week.

-Joel Martinson, Director of Music & Organist

Holy Week for choir members is both a blessing and exhausting as we are immersed in the transition from Lent to Easter. The frequent services and rehearsals has my mind almost constantly on spiritual thoughts during this time. Seven days of reflection and prayer.

-Darlene Justice

You really can't understand or fully appreciate the Great Vigil or Easter Day without walking through the rest of the Holy Week **services.** The texts and prayers, the hymns and chants, the stripping of the altar, and the comparatively bleak Good Friday service all prepare our hearts and minds for the Day of Resurrection. For me, Holy Week hits hardest on Good Friday and I weep openly when we plead for the wood of the cross:

Bend thy boughs, O tree of glory! Thy relaxing sinews bend; For a while the ancient rigor that thy birth bestowed, suspend; And the King of heavenly beauty gently on thine arms extend. (Hymn 166)

-Bart Stockton

There are two moments that especially move me during Holy Week and Easter. I am filled with a profound sense of sadness as I watch the altar being stripped at the end of the Maundy Thursday service. I feel grief-stricken at the loss of all that is familiar and comfortable. However, this makes the joy of the Easter Vigil all more glorious (to feel such deep



and different emotions only hours apart) when all the cacophonous bells start to ring, the brass begins the introduction for the Song of Praise and we proclaim the Alleluia again and again and again throughout the remainder of the service. A couple of Easter Vigils ago, I sang the intercessions which was a great honor to lead the congregation in our collective prayers. Every time we got to the congregational response, which included the word "Alleluia," people began to ring their bells. It was wonderful, even if slightly distracting!

—Delynda Moravec

Throughout my life music has been where I worship, where I encounter God, where I live. So when we in the choir reach the high intensity of the music of Holy Week—Palm Sunday, Tenebrae, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the magical splendor of Easter—I am filled with a sense of enrichment and connection, to the people here, to the renewal of life in nature, and in a special way, to life's continuity. When we sing that glorious Easter hymn, "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today," I see myself as a child in the choir with my parents, aunt and uncle, surrounded by love, processing down the aisle of the First Methodist Church in New Orleans, singing joyfully. Then as now: Alleluia, indeed!

—Dorothy Baker

The Vigil of Easter is one of the most important and best-attended services of the year. From darkness to light, the service has beauty and pageantry that expresses joy and profound faith. Being a member of the Transfiguration Choir provides us with the advantage of the view of the whole church from the Choir Gallery. I've often been one of the choir members who wait in the Gathering Space for the beginning of the Service of Light. The Paschal Candle is blessed and lit, and the fire passed to the assembled parishioners who have been waiting in darkness for the service to begin. I receive fire from the Paschal Candle and take it up to the choir to pass the flame. The sight from above of the congregation below going from darkness to light while the Exsultet is sung never fails to move me.

—David Reece



Ways to Participate More Fully in Holy Week and Easter

You don't have to be a musician to enter into the meaning of Holy Week. Transfiguration offers multiple opportunities to deepen your faith beyond attending services. You can bring bread and wine to be blessed on the altar on Maundy Thursday. You can sign up to keep an overnight vigil with the Blessed Sacrament for an hour from the end of the last service on Thursday until noon on Good Friday. You can participate in the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, or sign up to lead Compline or Evening Prayer. You can lovingly prepare a dish to contribute to the Great Feast following the Easter Vigil when we break our Lenten fast together as a community in Roper Hall or to bring snacks for our everexpanding butterfly launch on Easter Day.

THE GREAT THREE DAYS

March 29-31



Volunteers Needed to:

- Bring loaves of bread and/ or bottles of wine for Maundy Thursday
- Keep the watch before the Blessed Sacrament
- Lead liturgies during the night of Maundy Thursday & morning of Good Friday



CAELI ENARRANT Thinking Theologically about Earth Care



The Rev. J. Shea Gilliland

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."
—Psalm 19:1

am not sure exactly when I began to think theologically, or even to think at all, about caring for the earth. Like most conversion stories, mine does not involve a "Damascus Road" moment, when the Lord appeared to me in the sky and spoke audibly, calling me to change my ways. Rather, over several years, I have just found myself appreciating the gift of Creation more and more, and desiring to honor the Lord in thanksgiving for this gift by honoring Creation and caring for it as its steward.

I think a theology of Earth care should, like all theology, begin this way: with thanksgiving, with the recognition that God, out of sheer love, has granted Being to all creatures, has breathed life into us and created a world for us to enjoy as both venue and mediator of communion with Him.

In the book of Genesis, we find the familiar words: "God created... and God saw that it was good." Over and over again, God pours out of his own loving Creativity, giving life, beauty, and wonder to material stuff. And God tasks humanity with the sacred vocation of "tilling" and "keeping" the earth, as its careful gardeners, so that it might be the place of *Shalom*, of peaceful and harmonious dwelling shared between God and God's Creation (cf. Gen. 2:15). It is incumbent upon us Creatures to care for the gift of the Earth not simply because God told us to, but because it is the way that we respond to the gift God has freely given us. Caring for Creation is how we say "Thank You" to God.

It is interesting to me that my concern for the well-being of the Earth began to blossom around the same time I became an Anglican. Something about being introduced to the sacramental tradition, and especially to the Holy Eucharist, coincided with a desire to see the earth treated well. I think this makes sense, because of course the Holy Eucharist is the ultimate example of God using stuff—bread and wine—to communicate grace to us. And just as we do not treat the stuff of the Eucharist with contempt or negligence (imagine someone going to the altar rail, taking a Sacred Host, and then, instead of consuming it, throwing it in the trash...this should scandalize us!), but with thanksgiving, so should we treat the gift of the planet with the dignity that is due to its Creator.

"We know that everything on the earth cries out with pain the same as a woman giving birth to a child."

-Romans 8:22

And of course, care for the earth is not simply an isolated concern of environmentalists or starry-eyed Curates. No, the earth's well-being (and its desecration), though often neglected by the affluent, is a very visible concern to the poor of this world. While many of us are comfortably removed from the immediate effects of climate change and pollution, the poor are often forced to bear the brunt of our eco-negligence in the form of tsunamis, food deserts, poisoned water supplies, and the like. As Pope Francis reminds us in his encyclical, "Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home," when we neglect our sacred duty to care lovingly for the earth, when we treat the earth like an endless supply of raw material for our use, abuse, and disposal, it is the whole earth itself—and especially the poor of the earth—who suffer:

"This sister [the Earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her...we have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is amongst the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor."

(LS 1.II)

For many of us, violence done to the soil, to the water, and to the air is something very far away from our experience; we have little connection to the land, we have air filters and water filters in our homes to disguise the effects of our negligence, to protect us from the reality that we are causing God's good gift to us to "groan in labor pains." But for the poor and vulnerable—for those who live off of the land, for those without the suburban luxuries of fancy filters which screen out reality—for the hurricane-ridden poor of Houston and the rural poor of Kentucky, whose tap water is mingled with natural gas, for the urban poor of Flint, Michigan, who cannot afford to simply buy better water or up and move to a new city...for these, the violence done to the earth is a daily monster.

So a theology of earth care is ultimately not a Republican vs. Democrat issue; it is not about hippies versus bankers, conservatives versus liberals. The question of caring for the earth and her poor is much, much bigger than our petty partisan squabbles. It's about being a people consistent with the Eucharist; about living lives of thanksgiving, about obeying the commands of Genesis, about fulfilling our humanity by receiving the gift of Creation and offering it back to God as good stewards of it.

Recycling, buying a hybrid car, shopping at organic markets... these are all great practices, but they must be enfolded into an entire way of being that says "Thank You" to God for the gift of the Earth.

A theology of earth care does not ask "conservatives" to become "liberal" (some of the most ecologically conscious people I know happen to be "conservatives"); we don't get to just buy a Prius and be done. We must be converted to the Gospel, which teaches that all things are being reconciled in Christ to God; we must live lives of sacrificial, self-giving love and care for all Creatures, not least for our sister, the Earth. We care for the Earth because, as the gift of God for the people of God, it manifests God's beauty.

For us to learn to love the earth, for us to learn to say "thank you" to God, we must have our hearts changed. And what better argument for the earth's preciousness, for the earth's beauty and value, than the beauty of the earth itself? "The heavens declare the glory of God," writes the Psalmist; the earth, sea, and sky proclaim the beauty and goodness of the Lord.

In his poem, "Pied Beauty" the 19th century Jesuit, Gerard Manly Hopkins, attests to the glory of the earth and the God who Created it. May we recognize that glory of the Creator in Creation, and respond, as thankful Creatures should, by loving the gifts God has given to us.

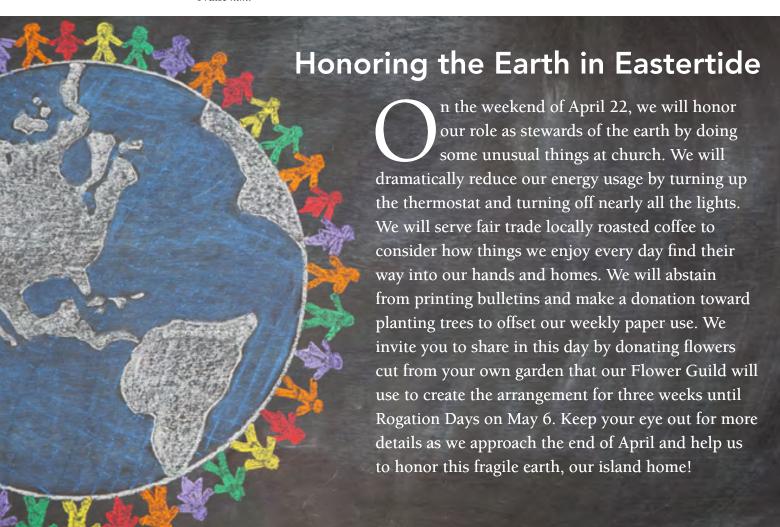
Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

POSTSCRIPT

I was asked to provide a list of recommended readings that have to do with "Earth care." At the risk of sounding trite, I have to say that my personal evolution on thinking about the earth came primarily from the Bible. So yes, this is an instance of a clergy person telling his congregants: "Read your Bible!" Read the Creation stories in Genesis, and reflect on the love that God has for the stuff that He makes; read the Gospels, and notice how agricultural, how earthy, Our Lord is; read Romans 8, and ask yourself what St. Paul means when he writes "all creation groans in agony;" and read Colossians 1, and ask yourself what it might mean for *all things* to be reconciled to God

In addition to the Bible, here are a few books that have also been helpful to me (I list only two books by Wendell Berry, but I heartily recommend any and all of his fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and essays):

- Bahnson, Fred. Soil and Sacrament: A Spiritual Memoir of Food and Faith
- Bahnson, Fred and Norman Wirzba. Making Peace with the Land
- Berry, Wendell. The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture
- Berry, Wendell. What are People For?
- Francis (Pope). Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home
- Wirzba, Norman. Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating
- Wirzba, Norman. From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving Our World ▼





By The Rev. R. Casey Shobe

grew up a few hours south of Dallas in Temple, and my family's church was (and still is) Christ Church. Christ Church is a lot like most Episcopal churches in that the staff consists of what I refer to as the church leadership trinity: rector, music director, and parish administrator. Occasionally they are able to find funding to hire other supporting



ministers, and when I was a youth in middle school, the church decided to hire a part-time youth minister, Tom. After Tom left for seminary, Christ Church received a curate, the Rev. Andy Doyle, whose name may ring a bell, because he's now the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas. Andy came when I was a junior in high school, and he quickly became a mentor to me. It was Andy who showed me that there were such things as "young clergy," and Andy also encouraged me to be a counselor at Camp Allen in the summers.

It's pure speculation, but I can't help but wonder if I would be a Christian today, let alone a priest, without the support and guidance of Andy and Tom. My youth ministers were extremely important to my formation as a person, and the development of my faith as a young adult. They helped my relationship with God evolve from the beautiful

simplicity of childhood to the richer complexity of adulthood. What I remember most is that they were committed to not only entertaining me and my peers, which seemed the goal of the (much larger) youth ministries in several of my friends' churches, but to helping me learn what following Jesus might mean and exploring the mystery of God. In contrast to the temptation to shrink God down to a manageable and easily digestible size, which is how God is often portrayed to adolescents and young adults—a thin veneer of a God who is mostly interested in everyone being nice to each other—my youth ministers gave me glimpses of a God who is far bigger than I could comfortably fit my arms around, yet a God I could see and know through the person of Jesus.

In the years since, I have had the privilege of knowing and working with several gifted youth ministers. What they had in common was a genuine personal commitment to the life and way of Jesus, and a dedication to helping youth begin to imagine how beautiful and hard and important following him really is. Some of them were in their twenties, while others were in mid-life, but what mattered more than their physical age was their energy and their faith. Likewise, their success at connecting and forming kids had more to do with their passion for the work and less to do with whether they were full-time or part-time.

My personal experiences shape my perspective as I seek out our next Director of Youth Ministries, and I'm grateful to share this discernment work with a great committee: Beth Kirner, Melinda Wedding, Louis



This important work is centered on discerning who has the gifts to lead our program with energy and faith, rather than finding someone who can work a specific number of hours.



Guion, Bruce Posner, Sophia Roper, and Nathan Jackson. In January, we met to reflect on where our program is today, and what we hope for it in the future. Then, in February, the committee conducted two "listening sessions" with youth, parents, and other interested adults. Out of those sessions, and the committee's own discernment, there is a crystallization of a few core themes to guide the process going forward. We want a youth program that is invitational, where kids who have not yet gotten involved, or who might struggle to find a safe community elsewhere in their lives, are sought out,

engaged, and invited to participate; one that continues to be "owned" by the youth themselves, with youth leaders generating ideas, sharing in decision-making, and putting on events; and one that fosters a genuine sense of community, so youth feel able to be themselves, ask questions, and experience genuine loving friendship. Beneath those core values, we want the program to be rooted in the Christian faith, with its ultimate aim being to connect people to the life-giving, transforming, and saving way of Christ.

As we anticipate the next chapter in the story of youth formation at Transfiguration and begin the process of calling a new director of youth ministries, my own story leads me to be open to a variety of "types" of candidates. It is probable that we will hire someone part-time, because the simple truth is that we don't need full-time leadership for the number of kids engaged in the program right now. I hope the position soon develops back into full-time, as the program grows and even more youth feel invited and connected to explore their faith with us. Given our significantly reduced budget this year, finances are also a factor, although the youth program budget remains funded at the same level as children and adult formation this year. Even with these realities, I





am absolutely committed to finding the *right person*, and I know the rest of the search committee is, too. This important work is centered on discerning who has the gifts to lead our program with energy and faith, rather than finding someone who can work a specific number of hours.

If you are wondering what you can do to help our youth ministry, I hope you'll first take time to pray. Pray for our youth, that they will grow to comprehend the depth of God's love for them, and accept Jesus' invitation to follow him. Pray for our parents, that they will receive every gift they need to patiently share the faith with their kids, even when the going gets tough. Pray for our sponsors and teachers, that they will communicate the hope of the gospel with clarity, and also be a source of love and support for the youth. And pray for God to raise up for us a new director, so that our youth will have a mentor and companion in the way.

I hope, too, that if God is nudging you to serve at Transfiguration in a new way, you might consider volunteering with our young people. Youth volunteers are among some of the most influential servants in the church, helping to teach, be a listening ear, and stand as faithful role models other than parents in a time when faith formation is so vital. \textstyle{\textstyle{V}}

March Through May at Transfiguration

March 2–3 Lenten Journey 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. | Meditation Stations in Roper Hall

You are invited to participate in Lenten
Journey, a time for reflection on the spiritual renewal of Easter. Most people need about an hour to move through a series of meditation centers, each



providing a unique experience of reflection and prayer. Instructions, materials, and a personal journal are provided to guide you through the experience.

March 4 Lenten Taizé Service 6:00 p.m. | Gathering Space

Experience the labyrinth by candlelight on Sunday, March 4 at 6:00 p.m. and join us for a contemplative time of prayer and song. The evening provides an opportunity to walk the labyrinth, sit in silence, or chant along with live musicians. Readings will center on the Gospel of John, our focus for the Lenten season.

March 17 Half-Day Retreat with Brother Keith Nelson 12:00–5:00 p.m. | Roper Hall "That They All May Be One": Personal Encounter & Collective Transformation in the Gospel according to John

Join Brother Keith Nelson from the Society of St. John the Evangelist for a half-day retreat, where we'll seek to encounter Jesus, ourselves, and one another in the characters and stories of John's Gospel. In John's gospel, we meet a motley crew of characters with one thing in common: each experiences a lifechanging encounter with Jesus that initiates a journey of spiritual transformation. Our shared friendship with Jesus opens the door to mutual witness, reciprocal transformation, and shared union with God. We'll also explore the Fourth Gospel's vision of Christian vocation as a path of personal encounter and collective transformation in the Spirit. Register online at www.transfiguration.net/guest-speakers

March 25 Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday

Join us before each morning service for a Palm Procession marking Jesus's entry into Jerusalem and the beginning of Holy Week. Please note, this is also the deadline to submit envelopes for Easter flower and music offerings to ensure that your dedication will be appropriately included on Easter Day.

March 25 Passion Experience for Children 4:00–6:00 p.m.

Families with children, join us to re-enact the Passion story in a meaningful experience for all ages. We will travel with Jesus and his disciples during his final hours and engage in role-play and storytelling. The experience will end

with dinner and fellowship. Childcare will be

provided for children younger than four years.

April 8Farewell Celebration for Mother Erin Jean Warde

Mother Erin Jean Warde has accepted a call to become the rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Ada, Oklahoma. Join us to say thank you for how she has shaped our formation ministries during her nearly three years at Transfiguration.

April 15 Bishop's Visit and Confirmations

Bishop Sumner will make his annual visitation to Transfiguration to confirm our youth and adults who have

participated in Youth Confirmation and The Way this year. It will also be the final day of adult formation classes for spring.

April 22 Earth Day Celebration

See more details on page 19.

April 27–29 Congregational Retreat at Camp Allen

Read more on page 13.

May 6 Endowment Fund Fellowship Breakfast | 10:15 a.m.

Between services, please join us for a Fellowship Breakfast hosted by Transfiguration's Endowment Fund. Trustees will be available to answer questions and offer information about joining the Legacy Society.

May 10 Ascension Day Eucharist | 7:00 p.m.

Celebrate the feast of the Ascension of our Lord with an evening sung service of Holy Eucharist with incense.

May 13

Final Day of Children's Formation + Third Grade Bible Presentation

During the 9:00 a.m. service, we will present Bibles to our third graders in an important annual tradition. Children's formation classes end today until fall.

May 20

Recognition Sunday for Sunday School Teachers, Youth Volunteers, and Choirs

During the 9:00 a.m. service, we will recognize our graduating seniors. Between services, join us in Roper Hall for a fellowship breakfast honoring the work of this year's Sunday School teachers, youth volunteers, and children and youth choirs. Please come help us thank those who have been teachers in our faith formation classes and our young choristers.

May 27 Memorial Day Weekend— First Summer Ice Cream Social

This summer, we continue our popular Ice Cream Socials (once per month) between morning services. The first one is on Memorial Day weekend at 10:15 a.m. in the Tower Cloister. Grab an icy, sweet treat and enjoy some fellowship in the sunshine by the bell tower.

Save the date for VBS 2018!

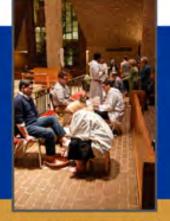
Rolling River Rampage: June 11–15.

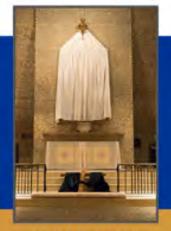
Registration opens in early April!

HOLY WEEK AT TRANSFIGURATION









PALM SUNDAY

TENEBRAE

MAUNDY THURSDAY

GOOD FRIDAY

www.transfiguration.net/holy-week

Holy Week & Easter—March 26-April 1

Monday in Holy Week—March 26

7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Tuesday in Holy Week—March 27

7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Wednesday in Holy Week—March 28

12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist 7:00 p.m. Choral Tenebrae*

Maundy Thursday—March 29

12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

5:00 p.m. Soup Supper in Roper Hall (ending at 7:00 p.m.)

Sponsored by Open Door Fellowship

benefitting YouthFirst Texas

—The Three Sacred Days (Paschal Triduum) begins—

5:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday Liturgy especially for children*7:00 p.m. Choral Eucharist with footwashing, stripping

of the altar, and procession of the Blessed Sacrament

to Altar of Repose *+

8:45 p.m. The Watch begins at the Altar of Repose

9:30 p.m. Evening Prayer



GOOD FRIDAY—MARCH 30

12:00 a.m. Compline3:30 a.m. The Great Litany6:30 a.m. Morning Prayer

9:00 a.m. Litany of the Blessed Sacrament

11:30 a.m. Litany of Penitence

12:00 p.m. Choral Good Friday Liturgy with Communion

of the Pre-Sanctified*

2:30 p.m. Stations of the Cross

5:30 p.m. Good Friday Liturgy especially for children*

7:00 p.m. Choral Good Friday Liturgy*

HOLY SATURDAY—MARCH 31

8:30 a.m. Holy Saturday Liturgy

8:00 p.m. The Great Vigil of Easter with Baptism*+ 10:30 p.m. Break the Fast Feast in Roper Hall

EASTER DAY—APRIL 1

(No Christian Formation Classes)

9:00 a.m. Choral Eucharist*

9:15 a.m. Easter Eucharist for families with young children

in Roper Hall

10:30 a.m. Church-wide Easter Celebration on Church Lawn

After the first two morning services on Easter Day everyone is invited to the Church Lawn for a special Easter Celebration including our third-annual butterfly release, refreshments and a search for the alleluia buried

on Shrove Tuesday.

11:15 a.m. Choral Eucharist*+

* Childcare + Incense





Offering gently worn clothing for men, women, and children, accessories & books.

Donations welcome!

NEW STORE HOURS

Tuesday 10:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Thursday, & Saturday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Sunday 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Closed Monday & Friday