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# illumine

enlightening and celebrating where God is at work in our midst



A PUBLICATION OF  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE  
Transfiguration



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 The Rev. Rebecca Tankersley—Associate Rector  
 The Rev. Nancy DeStefano—Pastoral Assistant  
 The Rev. Ginny Kivel—Deacon  
 The Rev. Terence C. Roper—Rector Emeritus

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 Mason McCamey  
 Allison Murphy, Treasurer  
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 Evan Williams

## 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.



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Cover Photo by Robert Hacker at the 2018 Easter Vigil.



From the Rector

# *This Fragile Earth, Our Island Home*

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

**I**t's really no coincidence that some of the most poignant moments in Holy Week happen in gardens. We remember the holy vigil Jesus kept in the grove of olive trees just outside the Jerusalem walls. We remember his interrogation in the garden courtyard of Caiaphas, the chief priest of the Temple. We remember that, after his crucifixion, Jesus' body was placed in a rock hewn tomb in a garden just outside the city. And we remember the morning of the resurrection, when Mary Magdalene confused the risen Lord with the local gardener. It would seem that God hasn't given up on the idea of us dwelling in the midst of a garden paradise (Gen 2), one in which we flourish in his presence and are finally at peace with one another and all of creation.

So it makes sense why so many people feel restored by being in the midst of nature. When we stand in the presence of the cathedrals of nature, gazing upon all that which God carved and shaped and grew over the eons, we somehow return to our purest, most essential selves. We are who are meant to be, and God's exultation at the goodness of all things declared at the dawn of time reverberates within our soul.

Unfortunately, we have not been particularly good stewards of this fragile earth, our island home, and the facts of our mistakes can be staggering: an area of rain forest the size of Indiana is deforested every year; there is a collection of plastic trash the size of Texas that won't biodegrade, floating in the Pacific Ocean; a dozen species are estimated to go extinct today (and every day). Not to mention the escalation of climate change and its corresponding weather havoc.

Before it ever became a political issue, our care of the earth was a spiritual issue. The Bible is unequivocal in its direction that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof (Psalm 24:1)." It simply does not belong to us, and when we neglect or abuse it wantonly for our own personal comforts, we violate a trust that was placed in us by God at the dawn of time. The extinction of animals, the acidification of oceans, the annihilation of whole ecosystems...these do not merely bother Sierra Club members. These things deeply grieve the heart of the one who brought them all into existence in the first place.

Every year on Maundy Thursday we are reminded of the great, new commandment Jesus gave his followers on his final night of mortal life. Rather than reiterate the commandment that we ought to love one

another as we love ourselves, Jesus elevates the call on our lives as his disciples by saying we are to love one another as *he* loves. Loving others by the standard of how we love ourselves is apparently too modest, or else not a terribly transformational standard when so many people don't actually love themselves all that much. Our command as Jesus' followers is to love like he loves.


It goes without saying that this is a huge, hard command. It's the work of a lifetime to figure out how to even begin to love with that kind of love. I wake up every single day and pray that I may love with even a sliver of the love of Jesus, because even that much love would change the world, and my life along with it. But this commandment to love

like Jesus is actually about more than just our relationships with each other. Because Jesus, the one who calls us to love with his love, actually loved all things into being. It was he through whom oceans and forests and polar bears and pigmy salamanders were formed. He brought all those things to life, and he intends for the beauty of Creation to be a part of the eternal future, too.

And if Jesus teaches us anything, it is that love is about more than feelings.

Which means that our love of this beautiful earth will need to go beyond emotion. We can't simply feel awe at mountain-scapes and coral reefs and call it love, just as we can't simply feel bad about oil spills and landfills and call that loving creation, either. Feelings don't become love until they reach our hands and become something through our lives.

Over the next few years, Transfiguration will be focused on directly addressing our abundant capital maintenance needs, and we should aspire to be equally committed stewards of both our campus and our world. In addition to repairing roofs, replacing air handlers, and updating electrical equipment, wouldn't it be incredible to have a kitchen that could handle reusable plates and cups, so we create less trash? Wouldn't it be wonderful to finish replacing all the lighting in our buildings to the highest energy efficiency standards? And wouldn't it be awesome to ensure the flourishing of all the vegetation on our campus, particularly those trees embedded in the concrete of our parking lot?

There is no shortage of ideas, but our success in attaining any of them will rely on more than feelings. It will require us to love, to love with the reckless, selfless, transforming love of Jesus. Because just like it is for everything else in our lives, love will be the answer. 



Garden of Gethsemane

# PASTORAL CARE —Summit—

By Julia Trizzino

**O**n November 17, 2018, 37 parishioners and staff participated in a "Pastoral Care Summit"—a 2-hour workshop in Roper Hall hosted by the Mission and Ministry Committee (M&M).



As a 2018 Vestry priority tied to Strategic Goals, the summit was intended to encourage knowledge sharing among people and ministries actively providing Pastoral Care across our church community. The strategic goal is to strengthen our pastoral care ministries so that all members feel God's loving care.

In preparation for the event, the M&M Committee conducted staff interviews to gather information regarding how we conduct Pastoral Care at Transfiguration. Highlights of the interviews included:

- Deacon Ginny Kivel is the primary contact point for Pastoral Care and communicates the needs during a weekly clergy meeting every Tuesday
- The clergy make sure everyone on the list has someone assigned and they talk about how they are going to check in.
- Not clear we have a good/ready to hand summary of the what the various services different ministries provide are—providing meals to sick or new moms, etc.
- Some ministries have a Pastoral Care liaison (e.g. iParentX has Louise Harms). The role is to coordinate Pastoral Care within the group.
- Communication is key. When there is a need, it needs to be communicated directly.
- Concern voiced that people tend to think Pastoral Care requires

clergy presence—should include full congregation involvement to be most successful

- Doing Pastoral Care is not a burden—it is a joy.

The M&M Committee concluded things appear to be working but what we do needs to be communicated especially "Inputs" (how we learn about needs) and "Outputs" (what we do). This drove the agenda for the summit. Participants included representatives from M&M, Clergy / Staff, Stephen Ministers, Daughters of the King, 2nd Half, Eucharistic Visitors, Prayer Shawl, Prayer Chain, St. Elizabeth's, St. Hilda's, EMF, iParentX and Open Door. Attendees actively participated in exercises designed to get to know each other and what the various ministries do, discuss how we hear about needs, how these get communicated to someone who acts on them, and what we do.

The group discussed what was working well and not working well as well as ideas for improvement. Ideas generated included:

- Link on church website to communicate needs
- Pastoral Care liaison for each ministry
- Communication of needs across ministries/break down silos
- In handshake line, include Pastoral Care liaisons with priest to help document needs
- Communication campaign to educate parish we ALL are responsible for Pastoral Care

Participants were grateful for the opportunity to get all their fellow pastoral care givers together at the same time and learn about the various ministries.

"Part 2" of the Summit took place during the January 2019 Parish Council meeting. This was to broaden the knowledge sharing to all ministry leaders, communicate findings from Part 1 and seek additional feedback. The discussion reinforced the conclusion that Pastoral Care is most successful when it includes full congregation involvement and Transfiguration has many involved caregivers. 🙏



- DAUGHTERS OF THE KING
- EUCHARISTIC VISITORS
- iPARENTX
- PRAYER CHAIN
- PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY
- SECOND (2ND) HALF
- ST. ELIZABETH'S MEAL MINISTRY
- STEPHEN MINISTRY







LEFT TO RIGHT: Parishioner Deanie Winstel with a Fig shawl! Heidi, Marguerite Kaufman's daughter, received a shawl in the hospital at Baylor. Charles Mullins, parishioner at St. Thomas Episcopal Church wearing one of our shawls.

# Prayer Shawl Ministry

By Sally Manning

**T**he Prayer Shawl Ministry is part of our Pastoral Care Ministries at Church of the Transfiguration. It has expanded its

original focus: to gift handmade, prayer-filled shawls to parishioners, friends and family who are sick, homebound, in the hospital, grieving, or recovering from multiple traumas (physical, mental, emotional).

In February, Prayer Shawls of "thanksgiving and joy" were given to fifteen (15) couples who renewed their marriage vows and whose marriages were blessed at the very special Eucharist on January 19.

On the Monday after the "standing room only" celebration and reception, the Prayer Shawl ministry selected shawls for all the couples. With God's help—he is always present during the selection process—and with various members of the ministry volunteering to deliver the shawls, we finally

delivered the shawls this past month. Even though the Prayer Shawl cabinet in the Parlor had quickly become bare, when we put out a call for more shawls to restock the depleted credenza, the response was overwhelming. Miraculously, we're refilling the cabinet again.

The Prayer Shawl ministry has over 30–35 active contributors—both



**Bryant and Xavier Surley-Strong received a shawl after participating in the Marriage Celebration in January.**

knitting and crocheting shawls of every color, texture, pattern, and design. Our members are both parishioners and visitors. One of our knitters, Ginny Ward, even brings her knitted shawls "across the pond" from England when she visits every couple of months. We also have both men and women who help us create the shawls, and our ministry works in cooperation with several other Transfiguration ministries:

The Prayer Shawl Ministry works in concert with several outreach arms of the church. When we deliver a shawl, we will often bring a meal, thanks to the meal ministry of **St. Elizabeth's Guild**. Among the many parishioners who have received shawls in the past 12 months are Betsey and Jody Hardman, who received both a shawl and dinner almost immediately after Betsey was diagnosed with lung cancer.

Shawls are also delivered by **Eucharistic Visitors (EVs)**, along with bread and wine, and flowers from the **Flower Guild**.

The ministry learns of potential recipients from parishioners belonging to the **Daughters of the King**, the **Tuesday Afternoon Book Study**, **Stephen Ministers**, the **Second Half Sunday School Class**. Often, recipients are the family and/or friends of Transfiguration parishioners. We've even sent shawls across the country to recipients on the east and west coasts. All it takes to receive a shawl: someone who loves someone else and asks for a shawl!

The clergy are actively encouraged to take a shawl with them when they visit parishioners in the hospital or at home. As of the beginning of Lent, we have recorded over 300 shawls delivered in the four short years of the Prayer Shawl Ministry.

We are grateful for this way to serve God and others through creative gifts. Please contact us by emailing me, Sally Manning, at [etsal@sbcglobal.net](mailto:etsal@sbcglobal.net), if you know someone who would benefit from a shawl. We meet once a month (typically on the fourth Monday evening at 7:00 p.m.) in the Parlor at church to knit or crochet together and share fellowship. All skill levels are welcome—even beginners! Instruction and assistance are joyfully provided. Please consider joining us. 🧶

Ministry  
Spotlight

# Introducing Bishop Wayne Smith

**B**eginning in Advent, The Right Rev. Wayne Smith of Missouri was given pastoral oversight of Church of the Transfiguration by agreement with Bishop George Sumner of the Diocese of Dallas. He visited Transfiguration for the first time on January 13 to preach and host a Q&A session between services. You can listen to this sermon from that day online here: <http://www.transfiguration.net/january-13-2019-bishop-wayne-smith-sermon/>

He will join us again for the Day of Pentecost on June 9 to preach and administer the Sacraments of Confirmation and Baptism.

We are grateful for his care for our congregation and his leadership. To have more of a window into his thinking and writing, you're invited to read his an essay published in the *Anglican Theological Review* in Spring 2015 about Ferguson, MO online at [www.transfiguration.net/bishop-smith](http://www.transfiguration.net/bishop-smith).

There you will also find two hymn texts that he authored. As he describes: "One is set to the tune Thaxted, and if nothing else, it provides an excuse to sing the lovely hymn tune based on Gustav Holst's Jupiter theme. The other is my paraphrase of the Latin text inscribed in the baptistry at St. John Lateran, the ancient baptismal Church for the Bishop of Rome. It is set to Nettleton, familiar to us as the tune for *Come thou fount*."

## More about Bishop Smith:

George Wayne Smith was elected Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Missouri on November 10, 2001. He was ordained on March 2, 2002, at St. Francis Xavier Church, St. Louis, Missouri, and his investiture and seating as Tenth Bishop of Missouri was held on June 6, 2002, at Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis, Missouri.

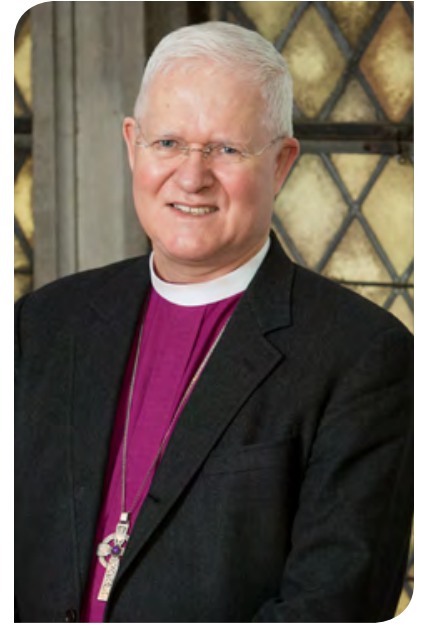
Before his election, Bishop Smith was rector of St. Andrew's in

Des Moines, Iowa, and had previously served congregations in Michigan and Texas. He was ordained a deacon in 1981 and a priest in 1982 for the Diocese of Northwest Texas.

A native of Abilene, Texas, he was born Jan. 29, 1955. Raised a Baptist, he was a student at Baylor University when he became an Episcopalian. He graduated from Baylor University with two degrees, BA (1975) and MA (1978). He received the MDiv (1981) from Nashotah House and the DMin (1993) from the University of the South.

He is the author of *Admirable Simplicity: Principles for Worship Planning in the Anglican Tradition* (1996) and various essays and articles. He is a member at large of the Corporation of the *Anglican Theological Review* and additionally serves on several community boards in St. Louis.

Bishop Smith is married to Debra Morris Smith. They are the parents of three grown children. In his spare time, the Bishop enjoys baking bread, shape note singing, reading, and collecting and restoring antique fountain pens. 🖋️



## An excerpt of "Blood Cries Out from the Ground: Reflections on Ferguson"

by Bishop Smith published in the *Anglican Theological Review* in Spring 2015 about Michael Brown's death in Ferguson, MO

"Indeed, racism continues to have its caustic effect everywhere in the United States, and people identifying so closely with Ferguson is an important acknowledgment of this reality. I recognize this fact. But for me, living as I do in St. Louis, Ferguson must first of all be local and not merely general. I never met Michael Brown, but I know some people who knew him well, high-school classmates of his who worship at one of our North County parishes. Ferguson was a familiar place to me before it became a venue for CNN, and the heartache I feel when driving down the burned-out section along West Florissant is something personal and visceral. Clergy and laity of this diocese have been regulars among the protesters in Ferguson and elsewhere in the area. Some have been arrested, and a few even ill-treated by police. I have protested on the streets of Ferguson myself. Family members have felt the effects of pepper spray and tear gas. Ferguson, like

Nazareth of Galilee, must begin as a real piece of geography, an incarnational reality with its maddening particularities, and a back story. Acknowledging these aspects of Ferguson's real life paradoxically bolsters its more general power as a sign of things broken and hope for life restored.

I begin a theological reflection on Ferguson with what I hope is an obvious statement, although I have learned during the past months that it is not obvious to everyone. The end of racism matters to the church. It matters because of the issue of justice, but it also matters because God's intent, at the end of the age, is to build a new world from "every family, language, people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9). The church is to be a servant of that vision, despite its falling far short of it, and any church that does not inhabit the wild diversity of peoples that Revelation describes is incomplete. We the church bear the wounds of racism, every bit as much as the places where we live."



## REFLECTIONS ON TRANSFIGURATION'S *Marriage Celebration*

By Michael Widmer and Alvaro Amador

*They were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"*

**H**ow often was this said in the wedding celebration and in the days that followed?

When asked to reflect on what the wedding celebration meant to us, I thought of this exclamation, which comes from the last line of Mark 2:1–12. It's not about the wedding at Cana, rather it's about one of the most unusual and compelling demonstrations of church in the Gospels. In the story, Jesus becomes renowned as a healer, so much so that he can't even spend the night in town for the crowds who are mobbing him.

One day, however, he returns home. When word gets out, the crowds mob him, townspeople fill the house, spill out the door, and mass outside just so they could hear him preach. Meanwhile, four people have a friend who is paralyzed. They hear Jesus is back in town and decide to take their friend to him in hopes of healing.

Unfortunately, they can't actually get to Jesus. Mark writes there is no room left, the house is completely full. Scores and scores of able-bodied people got their early. The lucky ones have good seats in the house and no one budges. Inside the house, Jesus is preaching, surrounded by scribes, his hosts, honored guests, and those who were privileged with a good seat inside. Maybe they were lucky to be in the right place at the right time or maybe they used sharp elbows. Either way, they were keeping people in desperate need away from Jesus, whether they knew it or not.

This could have been the end of the story, but these four love their friend so much that they are not content to stand outside in the street. Their faith made them bold and their boldness triggers the first of two miracles in this story.

The next moment, sunlight breaks above Jesus's head, then dust and bits of rubble fall as the group of four breaks through the roof and lowers their friend down



**Michael and Alvaro's wedding on May 5, 2012 at Trinity Church in Boston, MA.**



PHOTO BY CARTER ROSE OF F8STUDIO

to Jesus. Then the second miracle happens. Jesus heals their friend, physically and spiritually, and he walks away to rejoin his friends outside.

Most of the time, we focus on Jesus's miracles, but I think Jesus's miracle in this story only happened because of the miraculous faith of this bold group of friends. Mark does not highlight this point, but the implied message is that none of those sitting inside were willing to make room for someone who badly needed Jesus. In contrast, this group of four loved their friend so much, they literally broke barriers. Where there was no room, they made room, without, incidentally, dislodging anyone who already was already in. It's this series of miracles by which the crowd was amazed and glorified God, but we felt the same way at the wedding celebration. You, our community and friends, were like that group of four who broke barriers to bring us to Jesus that night.

Unlike our original wedding, Alvaro and I did little to make this event possible except show up. What made this wedding so special to us is the faith of those who made this event possible: decades of prayerful and brave witness in the diocese; hours of loving preparation for the wedding and reception itself. In our original wedding, we were the hosts. This time we were the honored guests, standing in front of the altar because of those whose bold faith in Jesus wouldn't let their friends stay outside. It's the best example of church we could imagine. Thank you, Transfiguration, for making this day possible. We have truly never seen anything like it! 🙏



# —A Guide to— HOLY WEEK

By Whitney Holley

**A** lot of families get excited for the Christmas season but the time of year I look most forward to is Easter, and these past few years I have been adamant that our family celebrate Holy Week and Easter at Transfiguration. It has become the most meaningful time of year for all of us and my extended family is very good natured about it. They only kind of tease me when Ash Wednesday comes around and I get excited for Lent to finally be here. I've been participating in Lent and Holy Week at the Fig for about a decade in varying degrees, first as a newly confirmed Episcopalian, then as a new mother, and now as a member of the Altar Guild and mother of three.

As my faith has evolved and my understanding of the liturgy has grown, I've become a bit of an evangelist for Holy Week and was downright thrilled when I was asked to write about it. I want to share a bit about what Holy Week looks like for me, as someone who serves on Altar Guild, as someone who deeply loves the liturgy, and as someone who drags all three kids and a husband along for the ride. I don't think there's any right way to participate in Holy Week, but I hope that this year I can inspire you to branch out a little and try something new if you've never come to the weekly services before.

Holy Week isn't a list of boxes to be checked, it's an opportunity to walk with Jesus, maybe for only an hour of a week, maybe for more. Holy Week begins with **Palm Sunday** and after all those Sundays in Lent, even the children (especially the children?) notice that



a shift is happening. We don't have Sunday school. We start the service outside. We wave branches and sing as we come in. There's even audience participation in the Gospel reading! It's hard to miss and it feels exciting and troubling all at the same time. We set ourselves up for the week ahead and are reminded by the abrupt turn of events in that one service (Hosanna right into Crucify) that our story as Christians is about happen.

For me, Monday and Tuesday night are simple services that give me some practice in setting aside time for the rest of the week. An easy reminder that something big is coming and that I want to be there for it.

Wednesday night is the **Tenebrae service** and I have to admit that I feel differently about this service every year. I've tapped my foot through it before, ready to be done, and I've lingered before, wishing it wouldn't end. One memorable time I attended I was very pregnant with twins and my uncle had recently passed

away unexpectedly. I went with my mom and sitting in the darkness with her, chanting and praying in a back pew in the dark was one of the most holy moments of my life. Recently it's felt like a space for myself. I usually go alone, or at least without my children, and I use it as a moment to take a breath, to declare the rest of the week as belonging to God. I need the physical service, seeing the candles go out one by one, to remember that the next few days are the holiest of the year for Christians and that it is worth the time and energy to honor them.

**Maundy Thursday** offers a visceral experience of the Gospel. As someone on Altar Guild, I am always anxious about this service and I'm always tired afterward. There are so many moving parts that it makes it a doozy to participate in. Our checklist for the preparation of this service is long, but care is taken in every action because there is deep meaning in every action. No matter the preparation and worry I'm always a bit shocked at how deflated I



feel at being shown how Jesus gave us that much love and died for it. Watching everyone from the very young to the very old wash one another's feet is a reminder that we still have the ability to access that love. It gets me every time.

After the evening Maundy Thursday service, an Altar of Repose is set up and everyone is offered the chance to come and keep watch with the Blessed Sacrament. Again I'm always caught off guard when I walk in to change the oil in the candles or to prep for the next service and find people in there praying, watching. To see so many people of all backgrounds make the time for this solitary act gives me such a sense of peace and hope.

**Good Friday** comes next and my husband and I have almost always attended the noon service. At first it was simply the easiest logistically as we have children and work to deal with. A late night Thursday and a late night coming up always meant for us that the noon service would mean our evening wouldn't be too disrupted, that a lunch hour would be easier to fit in. But what actually happens is that the rest of the day does feel disrupted, thrown off kilter and it has made Good Friday much more meaningful for us.

I know that many feel the same way about the evening service as it carries something else. It's the only time all year that there is no Eucharist to be had, Jesus' body and blood are fully consumed at noon and none is to be had that evening. Again the disruption, the emptiness left in the missing Eucharist helps bring home the story of the crucifixion and helps us wake up and notice what we are about to celebrate.

All of this leads to my favorite service of the year, the **Easter Vigil**, or the first service of Easter. I remember at first how weird I thought it would be to have Easter on Saturday night, and now I can't imagine anything else. I can't put into words how holy and magnificent this



service is. I've tried and it feels false. The service begins in darkness and we walk through the story of creation. Light fills the space and new Christians are welcomed through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Then, in celebration of the Good News of the tomb being empty, we ring bells and sing "Alleluia!" as loud as we can. Joy, pure, pure joy, is all I can say about that moment in the service. Then, we have a typical Eucharist, only everyone is giddy and tired and it feels like the biggest party with all your favorite people. To top it off we celebrate with a feast in Roper Hall! After a long Lent, we break the fast together.

**Easter Sunday** at Transfiguration is a lot like the Vigil in spirit, so while I encourage everyone to try the Vigil at least once, I know the services on Easter Day capture that same joy and love and wrap up Holy Week while also heralding in the 50 days of Easter.

As a parent of three young children I know it can all read as terribly overwhelming, not to mention exhausting. I hope my saying that you and your family can attend Holy Week services (as many as you want!) is encouraging. For the youngest there is always childcare and for several years that is what we did. Now, I bring the school-age kids with me and I want to say how worth the "hassle" it is. Because yes there is hassle! Getting out the door, managing supper, managing school work, it's a hassle. But not once has Easter come and I've wished we didn't attend the Triduum services.

We are also so fortunate to be at a church that offers family friendly services for these three precious days. I've served at and attended these services and can say that while they are meant to be accessible for children, they are in no way condescending or less holy. I promise that any adult can receive just as much blessing at these services as at the traditional services.

I also want to say that children can receive a blessing from the traditional services! Some stuff may go over their heads, but trust that there is something in it for them. I am a full believer in allowing children into adult worship and modeling it for them. When they are there, they are listening, and are as much a part of the Christian community as anyone else.

So, that's Holy Week! Come see why I keep coming back for more year after year. Look ahead now and clear off your calendar, I promise you won't regret participating in this wonderful and most holy time of year at Transfiguration. 🙏







# STATIONS OF THE CROSS

**F**or many Christians, observing a holy Lent is not complete without walking the Stations of the Cross. Moving from station to station, we remember the final hours of Jesus' life, beginning at the palace of Pontius Pilate, where he was condemned to die, and concluding at a rocky hillside just outside the gates of Jerusalem, where he was nailed to a cross and died. Transfiguration now proudly possesses two sets of stations—one recently created by Charlotte and Bill Hallett that now hangs in the church, and a set created in 2000 by Donna Standerwick in memory of Francis Berryman, which will hang in a new location. But have you ever wondered about the origin of this solemnly beautiful liturgy?

It all begins with the holy city of Jerusalem. That is where, in ancient times, the Temple was located, built as a dwelling for God and as the center of Jewish religion and culture. Ancient Jews observed Mosaic Law by traveling to Jerusalem for Passover and other principle holy days, so they could make prescribed sacrifices at the Temple. Those who lived near Jerusalem could make this pilgrimage annually, but as the Jewish people spread to new regions, those who lived farther away might make the journey only once in a lifetime, if at all. But all venerated the journey to the holy city as a holy act of coming as close as possible to the presence of God.

Though intertwined with Judaism, the early Christian Church interpreted God's presence somewhat differently. Rather than dwelling in a particular place, God could be fully encountered anywhere on earth, and the Spirit of God moved with equal power in all places. This was a major force in the rapid spread of the gospel, which was not only for our about a particular place or people, but good news to all. Yet, even as the early Christian Church spread out from Palestine to new and distant places, the city of Jerusalem retained a strong hold on the Christian spiritual imagination: it was the setting of the Passion of Christ, where he performed the mighty acts that conquered sin and death once

and for all. Thus, even as the Church grew and spread, Christians felt drawn to stand on the same holy ground where Jesus had stretched out his arms of love on the hard wood of the cross, and where God had raised him to new life. Thus, a tradition arose in the early centuries of the Church of pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to venerate the places associated with the central stories of the faith.

During their time in Jerusalem, early Christian pilgrims sought to retrace the final day of Jesus' life, including his walk from Pilate's palace to Golgotha. A tradition arose of outdoor processions through the city, and by the early fourth century a large church was built atop the place of Christ's burial and resurrection (known variously as the Church of the Resurrection or the Church of the Holy Sepulchre). Authority over the city changed hands many times in subsequent centuries, and the city's layout was altered, but even as the route changed, the tradition of walking "the way of the cross" remained strong.

However, very few Christians embarked on the lengthy, expensive, and often dangerous pilgrimage to the Holy Land, so the experience of walking in the footsteps of Christ was a privilege experienced by a rare few. Stories of the city and its holy sites made their way back to European Christians, but it wasn't until the time of the Crusades that some imaginative Christians brought the idea of walking the way of the cross back to their homes and churches. The early iterations in the medieval era were much simpler than anything we know today, but the experience slowly caught on and developed. By the 16th century, a mystical tradition had developed of experiencing the suffering of Christ through prayer and meditation on seven or eight "stations". "Those who cannot go there in person can still make this voyage by the grace of God, through devout and pious meditations as follows," wrote Jan Pascha in a 1563 book that accompanied one set of stations in Louvain, Belgium. "You will find here the holy places as clearly depicted as if before your very eyes, all shown by the



**Transfiguration's Stations of the Cross are unique in that they feature a 'non-traditional' 15th station depicting the Resurrection.**



**The first station was dedicated during the Evensong for Holy Cross in September 2018.**





descriptions of pilgrims, who have themselves been personally to these same holy places," he wrote. The act was more than mere remembrance, but an invitation to visit Jerusalem on the day of the Lord's Passion through heart and mind. It was around this time that the story accreted new, extra-Biblical elements, such as Jesus falling three times, and his encounter with a woman named Veronica who wipes his face.

Eventually, in the 18th century the Franciscan Order of the Roman Catholic Church sought to organize the diverse traditions into a single pathway, and thus was born a particular route through the city of Jerusalem, and also the formalization of fourteen specific stations marking holy moments in Jesus' final hours. Nine of them come from the gospels, and five were accepted from the spiritual practices and imaginations of medieval Christians. Most churches today accept these fourteen stations, and they are the subject of the tradition of the "Stations of the Cross" that hang on innumerable church walls around the world, including our own.

The liturgy that accompanies the images invites us to remember the agonizing moments of Jesus' final hours, and to appreciate the ways he suffered to take on and overcome the power of sin. In his suffering is

our hope, for in his peaceful acceptance of death, Jesus breaks the cycle of sin and violence once and for all. It is also a profound demonstration that he understands our suffering, too. He is with us every time we feel our lives are not in our own hands, when we feel humiliated, victimized, or as though we are walking through the valley of the shadow of death. He knows the very worst of human experience, and thus he has the ultimate compassion for all who struggle through their own hells.

You are invited to walk the Stations of the Cross as a formally led liturgy on Wednesdays in Lent at 5:00 p.m., or any other time as an act of private devotion (bulletins available in the Gathering Space). In our new set of stations, the artists Charlotte and Bill Hallett have made a special effort to create complex scenes that invite us to spiritually and imaginatively enter into the story. In addition to Christ and his cross, several other peripheral characters are present in nearly every scene, including the two other criminals crucified with him. It invites us to see the sacrifice of our Lord through various eyes—the women of Jerusalem, the two thieves, Simon of Cyrene, bystanders in Jerusalem, and of course, Jesus' mother—and meditate on his remarkable and unparalleled act of love. 🙏



**LEFT: Sponsors Frances and Bob Martin pictured with Station 2, "Jesus takes up his cross". RIGHT: Each Wednesday evening in Lent, people gather for a Stations of the Cross service prior to the 6:00 p.m. Eucharist. Service booklets are available for anyone to walk through the stations any time the church is open and a scheduled service is not happening.**

# what do we seek? *we seek Jesus*

## An Excerpt from *The Way of Love* Sermon

General Convention—July 5, 2018

By The Right Rev. Michael B. Curry,  
Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church

**A**t the Last Supper [Jesus] says, “A new commandment I give you,” not a new option, a new commandment I give you that you love one another. At the Last Supper when he showed them what it looked like by taking a towel and washing the feet of his disciples. At the Last Supper, “as the Father has loved me,” he says, “so have I loved you. Now abide in my love.” When he knew their world would fall apart, when he knew uncertainty and ambiguity was in the air, when he knew that he did not know for sure, or precisely, what lay ahead, and all he could do was trust the Father, and leave it to



the Father's hands through the hands of an empire. And it is then that he said to them what he may be saying to us, “I am the vine, you are the branches.” I don't know if you heard it, but “I am the vine, you are the branches.” Have you heard it, “I am the vine you are the branches?” Do you hear him whisper, Episcopal branch, of the Jesus Movement? “I am the vine, you are the branches. Abide in me and I in you, for apart from me,” check this one out, “apart from me you can do nothing. But abide in me and you will bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.”

Allow me, if you will, to reflect on that, the Jesus Movement text, by using another text. ... There is another story in the Bible in the gospel that actually may illuminate what Jesus was getting at here. I am the vine, you are the branches. Abide in me as I in you. For those who abide in me bear much fruit prove to be my disciples. How's that Lord? By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, not that you can recite the baptismal covenant, that's important—and it is important—not that you know the Nicene Creed by heart, ... but that's not it, not that you know

the Athanasian Creed at the end of the Prayer Book and those historical documents that only historians actually read. No! How will the world know that you are my disciples? He says that you love one another. Love is the way. Love is the only way. Those who follow in my way follow in the way of unconditional, unselfish, sacrificial love and that kind of love can change the world! That, that kind of love.

But the question is how? How do you do it? ... How do you follow Jesus in the way of love in a world that is profoundly unloving? ...

Several months ago, I invited a group of Episcopalians, clergy, laity, bishops, just a kind of a group of folk, and I asked them to come and meet, if they would just come and spend just a little bit of time to help me think and pray through how do we help our church to go deeper as the Jesus Movement, not just in word, but not just in deed, either, but for real. How do we help our folk to throw themselves into the arms of Jesus? ...

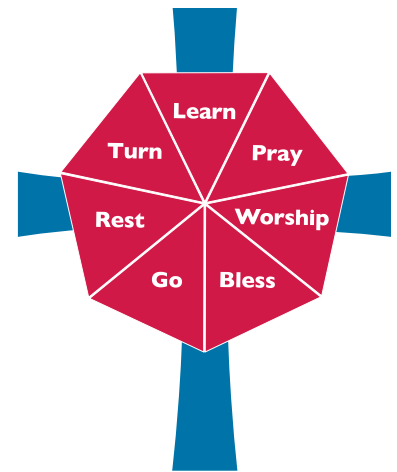
And so we sat down, we met in the Atlanta airport, cause that was kinda easy, an easy place to be. We met in the Atlanta airport and we just kinda locked up, [and] ... we just stayed there and just kept engaging, and they kept pushing me and we kept going back and forth, back and forth, and finally we realized something: we didn't need to come up with a new program for the church. We got programs and there's nothing wrong [with programs], but we don't need a new program. ... We realized that—wait a minute, we don't have to do anything new!

Jesus said in Matthew's Gospel, “The scribe who is fit for the Kingdom goes into their treasure box and pulls out something old that becomes something new.” And we realized that we already have what we need in the tradition of the church going back centuries. For centuries monastic communities and religious communities and people of faith who have gone deeper in this faith have lived by what they often call a rule of life; a set of spiritual practices that they make a commitment to live in, practices that help them open up the soul, open up the spirit, helped them find their way, a way of throwing yourself into the arms of God. They've been doing this for long, you don't believe me ask St. Benedict. They've been doing this a long time and we realized, what would happen, what would happen, if we asked every Episcopalian to adopt what we're calling a way of love, practices for a Jesus-centered life. What would happen? And we got folk together, some of the monastic communities helped us out, some of the theological scholars helped us out. People who do formation in the church people [and we realized] we have what we need. It's sitting in this room. It's in the church. We brought them together and asked, help us. And this is what they came up with. It's not a program. [What we found we already had was what we've now described to you in these flyers we're handing out and calling *The Way of Love*.]

See next page for a description of *The Way of Love* and how we're using it at Transfiguration. 🙏



# Embarking on *The Way of Love*



**E**ach year on the Last Sunday of Epiphany, we read the account of Jesus' Transfiguration. Here at the cusp of two seasons, this lesson serves two functions. First, the reading reminds us that Jesus is the Chosen Son of God, completing our journey through the myriad ways in which Jesus' identity is made manifest and drawing Epiphany to a climactic close. Second, it positions us within the inner circle of disciples atop the mountain, allowing us to hear God call them to "Listen to him" and inviting us to join that listening throughout the coming season of Lent.

Ancient Christians set aside Lent as a period of study and preparation for listening deeply to Jesus and living as faithful disciples. This journey through Lent toward Easter is a journey with Jesus. This Lent, we have been journeying with Jesus by exploring the Way of Love. Together, we are walking through the depths of salvation history into the fullness of redemption. Together, we are learning how to examine each area of our lives with the goal of creating or reaffirming a rule of life.

A rule of life is a commitment to live life in particular ways—a commitment to practice certain spiritual disciplines—that help us shed our old ways and anchor us in the love of God in Christ Jesus. The earliest Christian rule of life was adopted by ancient Christian mystics who lived in the desert around Egypt in the third century. Perhaps most well-known is the Rule of St. Benedict, which he wrote to guide monastics in translating the guiding principles of Christian faith into practical habits and rhythms of daily life. Just as monastics adopt corporate rules of life which specify how they will inhabit their days together, lay Christians often work on individual rules of life to serve as our guideposts in our journey with Jesus.

As we walk the Way of Love together, we seek to do just this—to craft our own rules of life through prayer and discernment, in partnership with God. We consider how God has formed us and the values inscribed on our hearts. Each week, we reflect on salvation history, walk toward the cross and empty tomb, and embrace the transforming reality of love, life, and liberation. Our goal is that, when we finally reach Easter Sunday and stand with the three women at the empty tomb, we will be prepared and equipped to hear and accept Christ's call to go and live that transformed reality.



**The Rev. Rebecca Tankersley,**  
Associate Rector  
for Christian  
Formation



**The Rev. Nancy DeStefano,**  
Pastoral Assistant

## **The Classes**

The Way of Love involves action. A rule of life requires action guided by faith and discipline. Each week, we've explored a different action involved in the Way of Love, a different component of our rule of life. We've considered what it means to:

- **Turn.** We are continually called to turn toward God and to repent of our turns away from God. New life in Christ through baptism involves regular practices of turning away from that which draws us from the love and light of God in Christ. We'll focus on disciplines such as regular examination and confession to assist us as we turn.
- **Pray.** Life on the Way of Love involves close communication with God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Prayer takes many forms: praise, lament, thanksgiving, intercession, dance, song ... the list goes on. We'll examine our individual prayer practices with an eye toward deepening our prayer lives with our Lord.
- **Learn.** Scripture quotes Wisdom as proclaiming: "My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver." In this class, we'll take a look at the gift of wisdom through regular time with God's Word. We'll develop a practice of holy reading and meditation.
- **Bless.** Many of us have a sense of the myriad ways in which we are blessed by God. To listen to Jesus is to take these blessings and share them with others. In doing so, we bear new life to the world. As we reflect on blessing, we'll explore our ties to modern day "idols" to see what practices can be transformed into blessings for the sake of the world.
- **Rest.** In the relentless busy-ness of life, we have lost the rhythm between work and rest. We live in a culture which lies to us, telling us that action is better than rest, that accomplishment is better than downtime. We'll explore what sabbath time does to restore us—body, mind, and soul—like the dry bones into which God breathes new life. We'll examine what sabbath means and the variety of ways which we can keep it.

Our goal is that each of us would conclude this introduction to the Way of Love with the beginnings of a rule of life. If you haven't been able to join us this Lent as we embark on the Way of Love, please watch for future opportunities this fall. We'll return again to this topic, because we know that those who invest time and energy into discerning the rule of life that will govern their days are equipped with a powerful tool to guide them through decisions and equip them to best to order their days. For just as Jesus was transfigured atop the holy mountain, each of us is called to transfiguration—transformation—to new life in Christ Jesus our Lord! 🙏

Members of Bella Musica perform a rendition of "Jingle Bell Rock."



# FIG'S GOT *Talent*

On Saturday, March 23, Transfiguration's Youth Ministries hosted their first annual Fig's Got Talent variety show in the Performance Hall. With 16 acts, this fun evening showcased the myriad gifts of many parishioners while raising funds through ticket sales to support our youth. Thanks to all who participated! 🙌



The group Universal Praise signs "All Things" by Nicole Binion in American Sign Language.



LEFT: Adelaide Shobe and Paul Rickard compete to blow up balloons. Elton Tankersley kept the audience laughing as the Emcee for the evening. RIGHT: Judy Loveday-Corbett plays a medley of Scottish tunes.



John Makowski plays the harp. BELOW: Paul Brown accompanies himself singing a hilarious parody song about Fr. Casey.







Sebastian Good sings a heart-warming version of "Firefly".



The Mazur Family Swimmers dazzle with their synchronized swimming skills. BELOW: The Transfiguration Staff bids the audience "So Long, Farewell".



# Why Transfiguration?

*"...we will do what we can and be thankful that we have been able to return to the place where our lives together began."*

## Kurt and Lisa Smith

**W**e were in a church search but not

finding a fit. The last time we were involved in a church search was twenty seven years ago when we were expecting our first child. We raised two sons, Harrison and Michael as Methodists even though we were both baptized in the Episcopal faith. After Sunday visits to multiple churches we decided to become more focused and intentional on what exactly we were searching for. Of course an inspiring worship service and outreach were necessary but in addition to that we were

looking for an embracing community in which diversity and inclusiveness was demonstrated and not just discussed. We wanted a church that had engaged members that had a true relationship with Christ. Transparent governance of the church was also important in how donations are spent and decisions are made.

Then the invitation came. At the bridge table, we asked Rob Bugbee if he was familiar with Transfiguration, "That's my church, I'll meet you there next Sunday!" We had researched churches on-line to get a feel for their community engagement. Transfigurations website reflected the inclusiveness in action with the LGBT Open Door group as well as the worship space for the Bhutanese congregation. In addition we had access to vestry membership and minutes noting financials as well as budget and planning information.

The next step was to visit. As we walked in that first Sunday to meet Rob we were warmly greeted by Bill Edwards, Jim Kirkman and other friendly faces. We could feel these were people who wanted to initiate a relationship. From the moment we walked into the sanctuary we felt a connectedness. Father Casey's welcome to visitors from the pulpit seemed to be a personal greeting. The flow of the worship service from the sublime music, relevant sermon to the prayers for the community all welcomed us and was (still is) soul enriching. We felt renewed and at peace that this was the church we were looking for. We had come back not only to the Episcopal faith but found a church that renewed us spiritually.

We soon took the church bulletin home and filled our calendar with the many programming events available at Transfig. We have always been "present" people as "ninety percent of life is just showing up." This is a church that makes itself vital and relevant into the lives of its members by reminding us that all people matter, that the church can be the genesis of transformation and change in the world, that we are the empowered body of the church. It's necessary to show up.

Lisa and I look forward to our future at Transfig. 🙏



*Register Now!*  
Vacation  
**Bible**  
School  
JUNE 10-14, 2019



[www.transfiguration.net/vbs](http://www.transfiguration.net/vbs)