

From the Editor's Desk

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I need to confess to you all that I am filling my time in quarantine with sourdough starter. I birthed one. I gave her a gender and I named her. She goes by Colette.

That's where I am about now. Since my cancer treatment puts me in the last group to safely venture out, one might conclude I am, like Colette, feeling a bit mentally stretched these days. My oldest daughter calls to ask me how I am and I respond, "Oh, I'm fine, sweetie; you know, I have my starter to keep me busy."

But there's more to Colette than just the mollycoddled base of crusty bread. She is a constant reminder to me that something gorgeous and delicious can come of a stinky blob of flour, water, and the bacteria she magically suctions from the kitchen's dusty air and her neighboring fruit bowl.

I don't need to tell you just how stinky it is out in the world right now. It feels like COVID is just one tiny particle of the putrid air we breathe. We stress about the recent heat wave in Antarctica and its implications for the future of our planet. We fear for the people in places like Yemen. We focus on loved ones who are struggling, protect loved ones who are vulnerable, and miss loved ones who are quarantined or who have passed. Many feel the financial sting in our nation, while others are struggling to help as best they can. Meanwhile, those who are disabled and who live under the LGBTQ+ rainbow (and those who love them) continue to fight for equal rights and safety.

For my family, partially formed via adoption from Haiti, as for many of us, everything has taken a back seat to our concerns for members of the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) community. It's tough to get excited about finally getting a haircut when I know people like two of my kids continue to suffer from the perpetual bite of racism and the dangers systemic racism bring. It stinks. It all stinks.

In this issue of *The Epistle*, our second Quarantine version, our contributors remind us to knead through the stinky bits to find the Holy Distractions that move us to rise during times such as this (I might be abusing the bread metaphor, but you have no proof). Mother Brenda starts us off with an invitation to more deeply discuss issues of race. Rev. Richard offers a timely reminder that disruptions lead to new growth. Our Senior Warden walks us through a recent loss within our congregation, while Erin, our Director of Education, grounds us in ritual and prayer. Constance, our Director of Youth Ministries, shares how our youth are surviving, striving, and thriving during this time. Virginia, our Music Director, offers some tidbits on what pausing has meant to her and the choir. Two members of our community offer simple, delightful stories of finding newness in the disruption of quarantine. Finally, be sure not to miss the tale of epic Zoom calls and abundant masks that punctuate how the Rohr family is navigating all this newness.

As stinky as Colette is, she yields an incredible, pure product. I see versions of that happening all around. People who used to be illiterate about racism are educating themselves to work towards a more generous future. People once afraid to create conflict are challenging their circles and donating to important causes that promote acceptance and human rights. I brought a friend Colette's first starter-baby yesterday. A new generation of bread will rise from it. As Constance reminds us, a new generation of activists and thinkers—hopefully scientists among them—and politicians and care-givers and teachers and doers will be born out of these Holy Disruptions we are experiencing now. From the stink, glory will rise.

