



Discerning Hearts: Newsletter of The Episcopal Community

"We are marked as Christ's own for ever"

Volume: 2023 Issue 01

A New Year's Prayer

Lord, You make all things new
You bring hope alive in our hearts
And cause our Spirits to be born again
Thank you for this new year
For all the potential it holds.
Come and kindle in us
A mighty flame
So that in our time, many will see the wonders of God
And live forever to praise Your glorious name.

- Author Unknown



Health, Happiness, and Hope

The Common Denominator is God



The Reverend Lola Culbreath
St. Martins in the Desert

Just outside of town,
northwest on Irene Street,
you will find, in the middle of
farm fields, nestled among
some pine trees, St. Martin's
in the Desert Episcopal
Church. A church that was
started in the home of Paul
and Nancy Lunsford in 1988.

The church became a reality, a small parish in 1995.
As the church family grew and with a lot of hard
work, a bigger church was built and consecrated on
April 13, 2008. Our Mission is to be a loving and
welcoming community for all of God's people, and to
be committed to loving God and our neighbors
through our words and our actions.

Behind us and before us

By the time you read this, you might say we have
been on a sugar high. Physically and literally, we have
been busy for about 6 weeks, starting with
Thanksgiving and time to be thankful for our
blessings of family, friends, and good fortune.

We then moved into the season of Advent; it is a time
of expectancy and preparation for the celebration of
Jesus's birth, God's greatest gift to all of us. Before
Christmas, everyone is busy with decorations, with
shopping for gifts and planning the family meal, and
attending Christmas services at Church.

We also must realize that so many may not have had
the wonderful fellowship of family and friends, with
meals, gifts, phone calls, cards. This, my friends, is
where we can make a difference in their lives, which
in turn fills us with joy.

Moving on into the New Year, after the parties and
fireworks are over, we decide to focus on a new and
better year, a new beginning. The place for that is
getting families back in church. We want our children
to grow up in church with good and moral values.
loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Health

Physical health is very important in having a happy
life, but also having a healthy spiritual life is just as
important.

*"Present your bodies as a living
sacrifice, holy and acceptable to
God, which is your spiritual
worship." Romans 12:1*

As you make out your New Year's resolutions. "I am
going to get healthy this year" "I am going to the
gym" "I am going on a diet" but...

"I also want to develop a healthy spiritual life." I am going to church.

A spiritual life begins within the heart, when we
recognize and believe that God's spirit dwells within
us. When we become aware of His presence in us, we
know that all we have and all we do is being directed
by him.

Hope and Happiness

How do we find happiness in a world of such
division? Our answers are in the scriptures.

*"Do not be conformed to this
world." Romans 12:2*

We are not to follow the norms or customs of those
who are filled with hate. Jesus's taught us to

*"Love the Lord your God with all
your heart, and with all your soul,
and with all your mind." This is the
greatest and first commandment.
And second is like it: "You shall
love your neighbor as yourself."*

Matthew 34: 37-39

Most everyone that I know, who has God in their life
is happy. I am not saying they do not have their share
of problems, worry, health, money, loneliness, but
because they have their faith and they trust in God,
they overcome their problems.

*"Now faith is confidence in what
we hope for and assurance about
what we do not see" Hebrews 11:1*

Church can be one of the places where we practice
and see our faith. our faith that relies on the promises
of God and the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. Faith
helps us overcome and rebuild relationships. Faith
that helps us through incredible physical suffering
and pain. Faith that we know when we ask God for
forgiveness, we are forgiven, and that faith can
change our lives and others.

It is through our faith in God, knowing that he loves
us and reading the scriptures that gives us hope in
the future, especially when we face difficulties and
disappointments.

Hope is not what is outside of us, but what is inside of
us and feeding that hope through faith and hope will
lead us to happiness, in ourselves and in our families
and others.

Finding God again is the greatest gift you can give
yourself and your family. If you are looking to enrich
your life with more than the same old thing, we
encourage you to find a church, The Episcopal
Church welcomes all people, and you will be
welcomed with open arms.

*The original article appeared in the November issue
of Pahrump Life.*



What is your ministry?

Do you have a talent, or gift you share with others? Do you feed or collect clothing for those in need? Do you knit for the merchant Marines or for children's hospitals? Do you read to the elderly? What is it that helps you to fulfill your baptismal vows? We want to hear from you! Send a brief article with a picture or two to communications@theepiscopalcommunity.org and we will feature it in an upcoming issue. Don't forget a picture of you or your group!



Sisters of St. Mary Elect Next Prioress

"The prioress must always remember what she is and remember what she is called, aware that more will be expected of one to whom more has been entrusted." (from The Rule of St. Benedict - II.30)

"In other words, she should strive to model Christ through her life and her leadership." (from the Customary of the Community)



At a recent elective chapter meeting, Sr. Hannah, CSM was elected the next prioress of the Community of St. Mary. The prioress serves as the leader of the Community and is elected to a five-year term. Sr. Hannah's installation will take place on Sunday, January 22, 2023, with a Eucharist at 8:30 AM in the Convent Chapel. Sr. Hannah joined the Community in 2015 as a postulant and made her life profession in 2021.

Reflecting on her election, Sr. Hannah said: "My favorite words of wisdom from the Rule of St. Benedict are "Never lose hope in God's mercy." Since the humble beginnings of our Community in 1865, led by our foundress Harriet Starr Cannon and four other Sisters - Jane, Sarah, Mary and Amelia - God's mercy has created, sustained, and strengthened our Order for almost 157 years. Being a part of the oldest women's religious community in the Episcopal Church means that we stand on the shoulders of unknown and unheralded women whose service quietly enriched the areas they ministered to, and whose lives of prayer benefited all of the world. As leader, Sr. Madeleine Mary worked tirelessly behind the scenes for the past ten years for the good of the Community throughout its joys and sorrows, challenges and successes. Her work enabled us to continue on this history, and to thrive and expand our work, ministries, and connections to the world. I am deeply honored to be elected as the next prioress, and I ask your prayers for guidance, as I, with our Community, strive to discern where the mercy of God guides us in this next chapter of our history."

Following a resolution passed at General Convention 80, January 22 will also mark the renewed observance of Religious Life Sunday sponsored by The Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas (CAROA). They explain: "This observance focuses our efforts to tell all Episcopalians and Anglicans about our monastic and Christian

Communities and what we offer the church," and thus it is a fitting day to mark such a transition in the life of our Community. Learn more about Religious Life Sunday by visiting religiouslifesunday.org.

After a decade serving as prioress, Sr. Madeleine Mary, CSM will enjoy a sabbatical period before returning to the Community. On Saturday, January 14, 2023, the Community will celebrate Sr. Madeleine Mary's leadership with a reception in the Convent following Evening Prayer at 5:00 PM. "We have much to be grateful for. God has supported our community both through great trials and deep blessings in the last ten years. Our friends, Associates, and Oblates, likewise, have supported the Community and continue to partner with it in extending its ministry. I look forward to this new chapter in our history as Sr. Hannah becomes Prioress and leads us into new directions and new growth. May God bless her as she undertakes her ministry as Prioress and may she be a blessing to others through her leadership," said Sr. Madeleine Mary.



Ruth and Esther | Epiphany 2023



For our journey through scripture this Epiphany, the Good Book Club will explore Ruth and Esther, books that explore the faithfulness and courage of two remarkable women. The stories of Ruth and Esther have much to teach us about the Hebrew concept of *chesed*, which means sacred kindness, as well as the willingness to be in sacrificial relationship with loved ones and our communities.

Mark your calendars to join the Good Book Club with daily scripture readings, reflections, and teachings, from Epiphany, Friday, January 6, to Shrove Tuesday, February 21, 2023.

[View and download the readings.](#)

January Birthdays

07-Jan – BB Vaughn



Event Calendar

2023

Meeting, Jan 12, 2023, 4:00 CST Executive Committee Meeting

Jan 26, 2023, 4:00PM Circle of Leadership

2024

June 30-July 09 - GC 81, Louisville, KY



Compline Schedule

January 08 - Bishop Duncan

January 15 - Merry Keyser

January 22 - Chris Butterworth

January 29 - Cynthia Sand

Compline is the practice of evening prayer. The community offers compline over Zoom each Sunday Evening at 5PM CST. Please join us! If you would like to lead compline, please contact Please contact Becky Taylor at bekatay@me.com



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Date of GC81 Announced



Mark your calendars. The Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements, chaired by Executive Officer Michael Barlowe, has met and established that our next General Convention will have six legislative days from Sunday, **June 23** to Friday **June 28 2024**. Details of the schedule, including additional dates in advance for meetings and orientation, are being worked out by a subcommittee of Planning and Arrangements. A full schedule will be publicized in early 2023.

We look forward to seeing you in Louisville!



Recipe of the Month

Becky Taylor



January brings a new year. In the South, black eyed peas are served to bring good luck and prosperity to the New Year.

Blackeye Pea Soup

- 2lbs of Smoked Link Sausage
- 1-28 oz of seasoned Collard or Turnip Greens
(I like the brand Margaret Holmes)
- 3 14oz cans of Blackeye Peas
- 1 onion chopped or
1 small bag of frozen chopped onion
- 1-14 oz can of Rotel tomatoes
(I sometimes use 2 cans)
- 1 box (32 oz.) chicken Stock,
(add more if you like more broth)

Sauté sausage and onions in oil of your choice. Add remaining ingredients and let simmer. I have added a bit of cumin and garlic powder for more seasoning. *Serve with muffins, recipe follows.*

Double Corn and Green Chili Muffins

- 1½ cups of corn meal
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup sour cream
- ¼ cup (½ stick) melted butter
- 1-12oz can of corn kernels, drained
or 3 cups of frozen corn thawed
- 1-4oz can chopped green chilies
- 1 cup of grated sharp cheddar cheese

Heat oven to 350 F. Line muffin tins with foil baking cups.

In a small bowl, thoroughly mix all dry ingredients. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, sour cream and cooled melted butter. Stir in corn, cheese, and green chilies.

Fold in dry ingredients.

Scoop batter into muffin cups.

Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until no longer moist in center. Let cool for a few minutes before serving.

