

Discerning Hearts

The Newsletter of The Episcopal Community

Volume: 2022 Issue 3

Lenten Greetings from PattiJoy

Dear Sisters,

I was midstream writing a Lenten letter to you, when Jan Richardson's blessing arrived in my mail. I am deeply touched and moved by her words. As we journey through Lent I offer them to each of you.

In Love,
PattiJoy

BLESSING THE DUST

All those days
you felt like dust,
like dirt,
as if all you had to do
was turn your face
toward the wind
and be scattered
to the four corners

or swept away
by the smallest breath
as insubstantial—

did you not know
what the Holy One
can do with dust?

This is the day
we freely say
we are scorched.

This is the hour
we are marked
by what has made it
through the burning.

This is the moment
we ask for the blessing
that lives within
the ancient ashes,
that makes its home
inside the soil of
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked
not for sorrow.
And let us be marked
not for shame.
Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are

but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made
and the stars that blaze
in our bones
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.

—Jan Richardson

from Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons



Lenten Message from Bishop Duncan

I recall a story about Admiral Byrd when he was returning from the South Pole. He was asked, "What did you miss the most?" Byrd asked his companion, Jack O'Brien the same question- "What did you miss the most Jack?" Jack replied, "Temptation!"

Lent is a time that we Episcopalians really know how to do well. It can be the time to deal with our own temptations in life. Who among us has not said, "What shall I give up for Lent?" To give up something that we desire to have: a symbol or reality that draws us away from the primary task that we all have and that is to come to know ourselves more fully in relationship to God and one another.

Lent can also be a time to think on the mystery of our faith and the faith of the church. Jesus is born and the incarnation of God is brought into the world. He lives and dies, and we are confronted with the reality that God in heaven is also suffering with and for us. This Jesus, you see, is not just a great prophet and holy man. He is the Word of God who changes the way we experience God- no longer the remote and dispassionate One.

For some of us, this is the time to journey to that place of failure within ourselves where love can't seem to take root. It is the self we often despise and cannot forgive.

And yet Jesus is already there stretching out His arms of love and compassion to embrace us. He is waiting for us to accept His healing of ourselves.

The disciples go with Jesus and journey in faith; the disciples listened to Jesus and to each other; the disciples told the story of God's love.

May God bless you who are disciples on your Lenten journey.

In God's grace and love, I am,
Bishop Duncan



Meet Merry Keyser

National Treasurer



Merry is a gentle lady with a beautiful British accent! She became interested in Benedictine Spirituality while taking the EFM course and helped to found a Benedictine Spirituality group in the Diocese of East Tennessee.

When hearing about The Episcopal Community she knew she had found a spiritual home. She and her husband have recently moved to Franklin, Tennessee where her church home is The Church of the Resurrection. Merry has many years of experience with her financial and management expertise both as a volunteer in her church and in her

community. She has traveled extensively mentoring international students. She now looks forward to using her varied experiences with The Episcopal Community as the National Treasurer. We are glad you found us, Merry!

Merry Keyser retired from her Federal government career in 2004 and, together with her husband, embarked on an intentional “giving back” career as a volunteer for our professional society – the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). Our IEEE volunteer work takes us around the world organizing conferences and although we initially agreed to do this for ten years, we are still going strong and expect to continue for a few more years.

Also, starting in 2004 Merry agreed to accept a Diocesan leadership role and has been serving as the Assistant Treasurer for the Diocese of East Tennessee. Due to conflict of Interest concerns I have not served on the Vestry or the Search committee for my own parish for many years but I do make myself available as a resource from time to time. I really enjoy serving my parish as a Worship Leader, enthusiastic member of the Altar Guild, and facilitator for many small groups.

My interest in Benedictine spirituality was fostered by my EFM mentor back in 1995 and we were both founding members of the East Tennessee Benedictine Study Group. Sadly, we no longer meet. During one of my IEEE volunteer activities for a conference in Rome I was fortunate to take a day off to travel to the abbey of Monte Cassino. I would encourage anyone who is considering making that trip to go ahead and make that effort. It is so worth the experience. Much of what I learned there has formed the basis for the content for study groups that I have facilitated in my parish in recent years.

Sewing as Prayer

Barbara Willis

As a youngster sewing served its purpose. As time went by, I came to realize that for me it's not just sewing but it's a craft for me use to help others. I enjoy sewing the various items and when I'm sewing, I always picture the person, who will be receiving these beautiful quilts, totes, placemats, and prayer pillows. Yes, I always start a project with a prayer of thanksgiving.

Moving to Florida, I joined the Quilters' Guild, where



I learned more about making quilts, We/I started a quilting mission, at St. Mark's Church, Venice. We have made quilts for children in our Church's Preschool, children in orphanage in

China, for children in All Children's Hospital, and for our Children in Dominican Republic, I have also made sun dresses for the little ones just to name a few.

I have made pillowcases for the children in Foster Care. Some of the fabrics is donated from members of



the church but most I purchased. There is much gratification that comes with matching colors and seeing the finished projects.

This is a gift that was given to me and I have to share this beautiful gift, yes, we are our brothers' keepers.



Winter Lenten Book Study

The Practice of Finding: How Gratitude Leads to the Way of Enough by Holly W. Whitcomb

Each week from February 20 to April 12 we will read and discuss a chapter. Each session will be lead by a member of the Community. The study is followed by Compline. The book may be purchased from Amazon [here](#).



A Feast of Women

Stories Celebrating Women Who Impacted the Episcopal Church presented Every Thursday during Lent 2022 at 3:00 pm Eastern Time online. Through April 7.

Six stories about women who made a difference in the Episcopal Church. Six women who made an impact on the Episcopal Church in six awesome ways—women with love, persistence, energy, and creativity. Each of these women enhanced the life of their church.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZotdeyqrDsqHdMXRmMfvSKlnK5B5gpYCHK5>



Weekly Compline

Sundays on Zoom:

7:00PM Eastern; 6:00PM Central; 5:00PM Mountain 4:00PM Pacific;

email covenant@theepiscopalcommunity.org for Zoom information.

Compline Schedule of Leaders:

Compline in February:

Feb. 27 BB Vaughn & Carol Putnam

March Compline will be led by the leaders of the weekly book study.



Calendar

January 11, 2022 - Executive Committee Meeting

January 25, 2022 - Circle of Leadership Meeting

February 20-April 12 - Lenten Book Study

April 12, 2022 - Executive Committee Meeting

April 26 2022 - Circle of Leadership Meeting

July 5th- July 14th - The Episcopal Church 80th

General Convention, Baltimore, MD

July 7th Episcopal Community Annual Meeting,

Baltimore, MD

October 11, 2022 - Executive Committee Meeting

October 25, 2022 - Circle of Leadership Meeting

