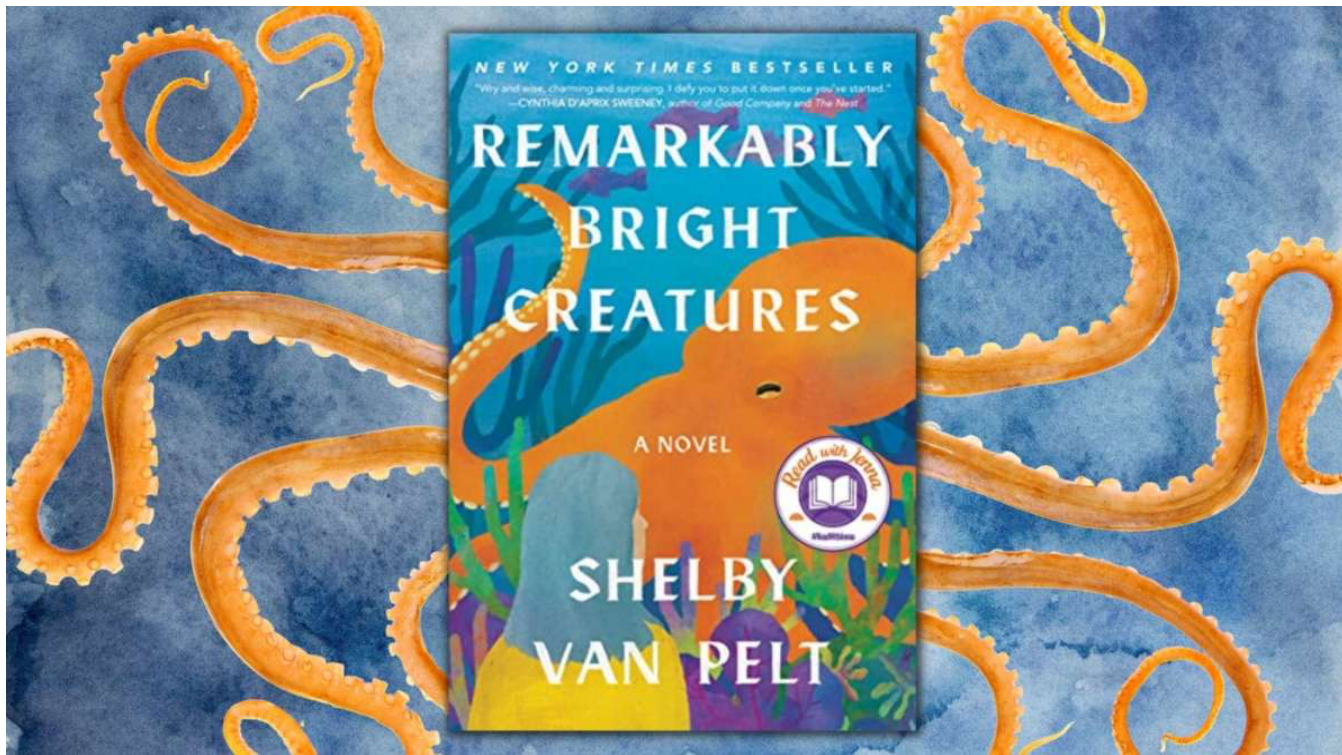


Lenten Gatherings 2025: “Remarkably Bright Creatures”

Join us for fellowship, good humor,
and mutual self-discovery this spring.

Four gatherings, Starting March 10th
Mondays, 5:30 PM at St. Columba's, Pa'auilo
Wednesdays, 5:30 PM at St James' Church, Waimea



During Lent the Church remembers the life of Christ as we sojourn with Jesus in scripture. We reflect on this penitential season with His own trials during forty days in the Wilderness and we are invited into a personal experience of Lent by reflecting on our individual life experiences and trials. This year you are invited to join the community in this observance as we share in the reading of *“Remarkably Bright Creatures”* by Shelby Van Pelt in spiritual pilgrimage with visiting Presbyterian pastor, the Rev. Joseph “Joey” Hester.

Through the alien, insightful, and often humorous observations of Marcellus, a Giant Pacific Octopus, we explore the trials of human experience in loss, rebellion, grief, and death with varied rich and complex human companions. And we discover healing, redemption and new life in the process. As Marcellus observes, humans for all their shortcomings are indeed "remarkably bright creatures."

Limited copies of the book are available for purchase via the Parish Office. The best option is to download the book to your tablet or E-reader. You do not have to read the book to attend, it is hoped you will.

Each evening will include prayer, food, and discussion.

While we hope you will join us in person, the Wednesday gathering at St. James' will be offered online as well.

Note the same teaching will be offered on Mondays & Wednesdays. Come to either or both!



Ash Wednesday, March 5th, Noon Eucharist at St. James' Church & 5:30 PM at St. Columba's Church.



Week One: TO SOJOURN IN THE WILDERNESS: The different characters in the book, *Remarkably Bright Creatures*, have all lost something. What does it mean to travel this life having experienced loss and move toward healing? As Jesus reveals, time in the wilderness is a time of self-reflection and introspection. Discovering and rediscovering who we are and what we are called to do and be. Psalm 69.

Week Two: TO HEAL AND REDEEM: Continuing with the theme of the book, the characters develop, without words, a relationship. Restoration and a new beginning happen through the relationships they develop. As Christians, in our grief, loss, illness, and weakness, a new reality can emerge, by trusting in the Spirit.

Joey will also be preaching the weekend of March 22nd & 23rd, expanding on this theme in a homily entitled, "A Little Help from My Friends". *Luke 13:1-9*.

Week Three: TO REMEMBER: Coming to terms with what happened in the past and with the new relationships that develop, there is a reconciliation of memories. New beginning and new family. *Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32.*

Week Four: TO RECREATE: Through the serendipitous intersection coincidences of the novel's characters, they learn to embrace renewed and more fulfilling lives together. They build a new community of faith. We too have found our way together. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit seeks to shape us into a new community. *Isaiah 43:16-21: "The people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise."*



“My death is imminent.
But I am not dead yet.”

-- *Shelby Van Pelt "Remarkably Bright Creatures"*



“I invite you therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a Holy Lent

by self-examination and repentance;
by prayer, fasting, and self-denial."
and by reading
and meditating on God's Holy Word.”

--“*The Book of Common Prayer*”, p. 265



The Rev. Joseph Hester, a North Carolina native, is an ordained Presbyterian Minister of Word and Sacrament and has served several churches in eastern North Carolina over the course of four decades. He is a graduate of Duke University and Duke Divinity School and was a Robert Cushman Theological Exchange Fellow at the University of Bonn. He has trained with the Haden Institute in spiritual direction and is currently completing his Doctor of Ministry with Campbell University Divinity School. Joey is a longtime friend and colleague of our Rector, David Stout. An avid traveler and teacher, he is thankful to the St James’ and St Columba congregations for this opportunity to share this season of Lent.