

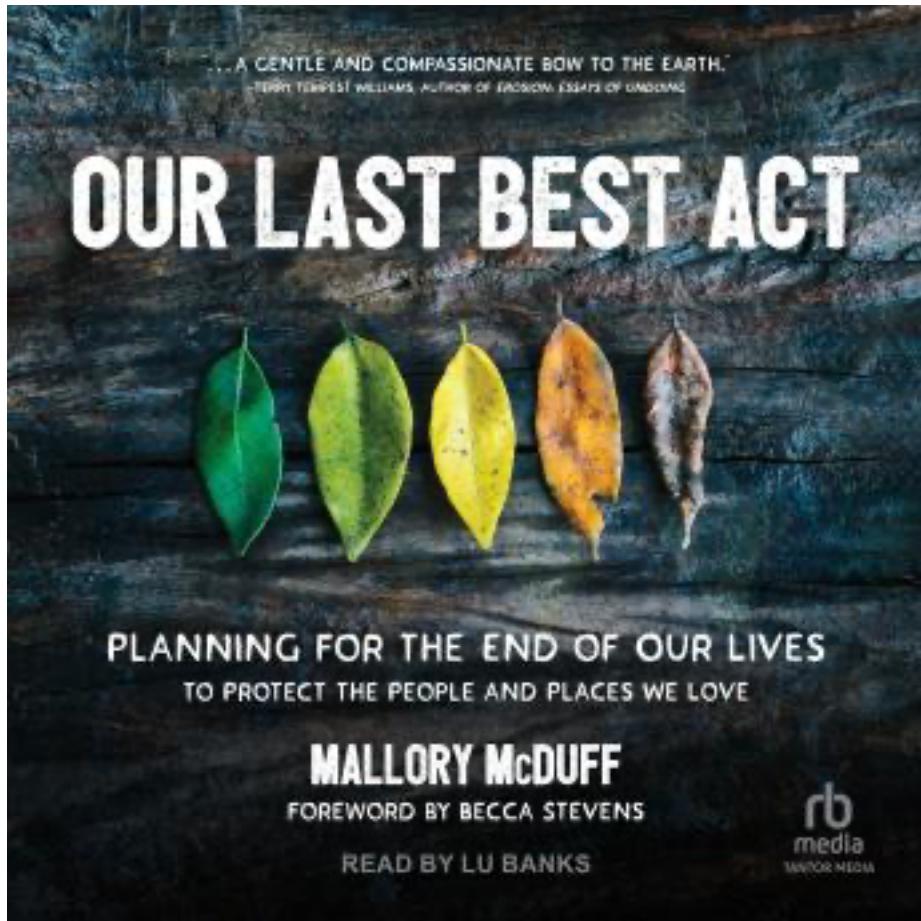
“Remember that you are dust”

Please join St. John’s Episcopal on Wednesdays, 5:30 – 7:15 pm during the season of Lent in the Parish Hall for a simple soup, salad and bread dinner followed by a Lenten program. The schedule for the Lenten programs is as follows:

Wednesday, February 21 – “Remember that you are dust” are the words spoken as a cross of ashes are marked on our foreheads as part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy. This particular Lenten program will indeed be a reminder that we are dust because we will be given the opportunity to make preparations for our own Celebration of Life (funeral) service. A simple workbook will be provided to offer guidance and suggestions for the particulars of the funeral liturgy (service hymns, prayers, Holy Eucharist or not, flower choice, burial wishes, etc.) so that we can make a record of our final wishes and share these with our loved ones. Taking the time to make these decisions is a holy gift to our loved ones and to ourselves. We will focus specifically on End of Life decisions related to funeral service/liturgy and burial wishes. Paul Templon will be on hand to assist in choosing hymns etc. and other resource people and texts will be available. If you choose, you can leave a copy of your plans on file in the church office. David McNair will lead this program.

Wednesday, February 28 – Natural Death Care and Education. Marta Donahoe and Carole Shoaf will offer information about the spiritual, emotional and ecological benefits of natural death care and vigils. As end of life doulas, they have experienced first-hand how caring for our own before and after death is a life altering experience. They are both active members of the Center for Conscious Living and Dying (CCLD) which is a wonderful growing community in Swannanoa.

Wednesday, March 6 - “Planning for the end our lives to protect the people and places we love.”



As we begin to contemplate death and to embark on practical planning for life's end, many of us long to leave a legacy beyond a transfer of money and property--one that ensures a sustainable earth for our loved ones, our communities, and generations to come. But where do we even begin?

With the sudden deaths of both of her parents, Mallory McDuff found herself in a similar position. Utterly unprepared both emotionally and practically, she began to research sustainable practices around death and dying, determined to honor their commitment to caring for the earth. For McDuff, a professor of Environmental Studies at Warren Wilson College and an environmentalist, what started as a highly personal endeavor expanded into a yearlong exploration and assessment of green burials, aquamation, green cemeteries, home funerals, and human composting.

In *Our Last Best Act*, McDuff bridges the gap between environmental action and religious faith by demonstrating that when the two are combined, they become a powerful force for the greater good. Full of practical information and support, this book equips readers to make

decisions for their own end-of-life planning. In a world experiencing a climate crisis and a culture that avoids discussions about death and dying, this book opens the conversation about the choices we make--and how it's possible for our death to honor our values, create a sustainable legacy, and help to heal the earth.

Wednesday, March 13 – Al Whitesides will be our guest sharing about his life and experience growing up in Asheville especially in relation to our city's struggle to gain racial justice and equality and the healing of racism including the current effort of making reparations. Al grew up in Asheville except for his years in college and the Navy. His life is one of ongoing positive activism to ensure African Americans have the rights and opportunities to participate fully in American life. While a student at Stephens-Lee High School (closed in 1965), he joined his classmates to form and sustain ASCORE (Asheville Student Commission on Racial Equality). With adult mentors in the background and a few white students from Lee Edwards High School (now Asheville High), a group of black teens led the local civil rights movement for equal treatment and service in restaurants, retail stores, libraries, public pools, and parks. These youth were Asheville's barrier breakers and repairers of the breach. Al's commitment to a healthy and equitable community continues to this day.

Al enjoyed a successful life-long career as a banker at First Union National and Wells Fargo Banks. His life is one of public service and leadership, for example, at Givens Estates, Hopkins Chapel, YMI Cultural Center, Bele Chere, as a member of the Asheville City School Board, and trustee positions at both NC Central University and UNC-Asheville.

Al is the first black person to be elected to the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners and he is currently serving in his second term. His wife, Shirley, also an ardent activist, taught art for 35 years at Asheville Middle School. They have 2 daughters.

Wednesday, March 20 - DREAMS, Visitors in the Night led by Rose Wilkerson. *Do you ever wonder why you dream? Do you even give them a second thought on waking? Or do "they fly forgotten" at the break of day? The season of Lent is a good time to ponder these questions, ask others, and sit together in the Mystery of these "visions of the night." Join Rose in exploring how dreams, like prayer, may be a way to draw closer to The Creator, Source, and Giver of Life, and to LISTEN--and maybe even*

*HEAR--what's trying to get our attention. With the Psalmist may we say:
"Let me hear what you will speak when I turn to you in my heart."*