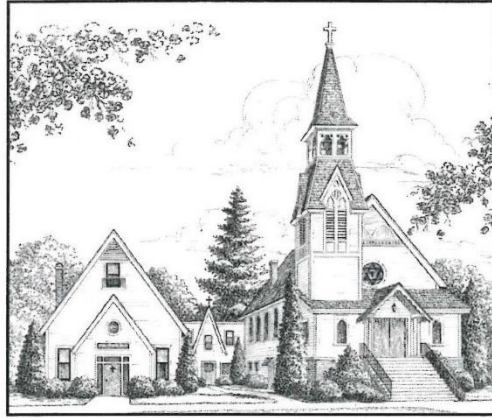


The Episcopaper



St. John's Snohomish
Serving our community since 1892

Happy St. John's New Year

The Rev. Eliacín Rosario-Cruz

Beloveds, we are always living in holy time and standing in holy ground.

I've been sorting through some of the drawers, boxes, and shelves. I'm amazed at the odd collections of strange things I've gathered through the years—buttons, pins, coins, cards, patches, notes, pens, crosses, movie tickets, oh, so many things. They may be just objects to someone else, but to me, they are items that tell part of my story. They are little treasures. For someone, a dried flower is just a dead plant unless it is also from the corsage worn to the senior prom. An old pocketknife is just a tarnished tool unless it is the first knife your father gave you when he thought you were old enough to use it.

These kinds of things connect us with moments and stories important, meaningful, and precious to us. At times, we might even call those things sacred symbols. A symbol is a sign (or anything that can be taken as a sign) of something

that enables us to experience what it signifies. When we look at an American flag, our eyes see a red, white, and blue cloth, but we connect with the values and ideals that the flag represents. When we look at a crucifix, our eyes see the representation body hanging on a cross, but we simultaneously perceive what Christ means to us. The word "symbol" comes from two Greek words that mean to put or throw together. A symbol puts together a sign and signified into one experience of heightened perception. Sacrament—outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace.

"A sign of something sacred" happens to be the original meaning of the Latin word, *Sacramentum*, *sacra* meaning sacred, and *mentum* meaning related to the mind. A sacrament is often called a sacred sign, but what makes the sign sacred is actually the spiritual reality that it signifies. Since the sign

(Continued on page 2)



Fr. Eliacín

the spiritual reality that it signifies. Since the sign

The Episcopaper

January 2021

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We need contributions for the next edition of the Episcopaper in April 2021. Please contact Jackie, Sharon, or Dave.

(Rector’s message continued from page 1)

and the signified are experienced together, the sacredness of the spiritual reality gets associated with the material symbol. This is why symbols are regarded as sacred objects, which is why it is considered a sacrilege to deface a crucifix or burn an American flag.

We are constantly “sacramentalizing” things and experiences. It is common to experience the Divine through the beauty of nature in the Pacific Northwest. Our spirits are uplifted by the presence of people whom we love. We hold objects in our hands that takes us to moments of bliss, items that reminds us of how far we’ve come, and how much we’ve changed.

At work, besides the usual frustrations, we encounter people and engage in tasks that enliven our spirit. Someone assists us in a difficult task, or we help someone else, it feels meaningful. If we are attentive, we are constantly given opportunities to make lives better for others, in some tiny way, and when that happens, we are making that moment a holy one.

At home with our families, their very presence is a sign of multiple relationships, memories stretching into the past, and hope reaching into the future. Whether it is pleasant or confrontational, every conversation reveals the ways we care for each other. No matter how ordinary, every task says something about who we are, how we feel toward those we live with, and how they feel toward us. Setting the table, washing dishes, ironing clothes, repairing the garage door, cleaning the house, fixing a broken

toy—these and other daily activities symbolize who we have become and who we want to be.

Jesus, too did ordinary things. He ate with people, listened to their complaints, helped them when he could, spoke to them from his heart. Some people saw and heard him, and they thought of him as just another rabbi at best—or as a threat to national security at worst. However, others allowed him to minister to them, and they felt something that seemed like the power and love of God. Or they allowed him to teach them, and they sensed in his human words the wisdom and understanding of God.

Jesus was, as some theologians say, a sacrament of God. That is, his words and deeds symbolized God and made God present to people long ago, and they have continued to do so through the centuries. Jesus incarnated the reality of God and made it available to people during his lifetime, just as he continues to do so in our lifetime.

Jesus as the sacrament of God makes all of life sacramental. It is everyday sacramentality that makes liturgical sacramentality possible. We do not wait for the sacraments in our liturgies to hallow our everyday life, but it is in recognizing the sacramentality of our everyday life that we can experience the sacredness of the Christian rituals.

Beloveds, we are always living in holy time and standing in holy ground.

Fr. Eliacín



Photo by Bill Tygret

Happy New Year, Pandemic 2021

By Pat Chapin

Still wearing masks, we don't gather, and the pandemic is still here. But there is light at the end of the tunnel—vaccines are here!

Soon we can all be vaccinated and after awhile we can gather, attend church, and hug our grandchildren.

A look back since we last communicated, during this time of staying home—what to do? Read, do puzzles, clean closets, watch movies, and numerous other endeavors. It was baking for me. I considered it my comfort food. I found ways to make vegetables more interesting, such as carrot cake, zucchini bread, rhubarb custard pie, banana cream pie, and fresh apple cake. Just to name a few.

But this comfort food has its downside. Across my lips and on my hips! I stepped on my scale this morning. It said, "Please practice social distancing. Only one person at a time on the scale."

Happy dieting?



When the going gets tough, the tough bake banana bread



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January 2021

It has been nearly one year since St. John's Episcopal Church had in-person services. But the life of the church goes on! Thanks to computer technology, the people of St. John's can meet virtually by using ZOOM, Facebook, Google Hangouts—to name a few options—to participate in worship, join in a Bible discussion, watch Sunday services at St. Mark's Cathedral, or conduct St. John's business meetings. The Diocese of Olympia will hold its annual meeting in a couple of weeks—entirely online. Until COVID-19 goes away, this is the world we live in now.

We encourage all members of St. John's to take advantage of our online opportunities. The place to start is the Friday email which is sent out at noon every Friday. If you are not getting it now, call the St. John's office manager, Kim Eichner, at 360-568-4622, and have her put you on the mailing list.

Weekly Calendar

Sunday

Sunday Worship email

This email is sent out early Sunday morning. You can watch the Morning Prayer service anytime.

Online Sunday coffee hour

This is a ZOOM meeting every Sunday at 10:15. See the Friday email for the link, password, and meeting ID.

St. John's Facebook page

URL: www.facebook.com/stjohnsnohomish.org

This begins streaming at 11:00 AM on Sunday.

St. John's YouTube page

The recorded service is available Sunday mornings and thereafter.

Wednesday

Compline prayers

Join the group on ZOOM at 7:00 PM. See the Friday email for the link, password, and meeting ID. **Note the time change—formerly 8:00.**

Thursday

Thursday Bible conversation

Join us in casual conversation about the Gospel text for the upcoming Sunday. To find out which reading we will talk about, go to The Episcopal Church Lectionary page, find the date for the next Sunday, click on the link for that day, there you will find the Gospel reading. See the Friday email for the link, password, and meeting ID.

URL: www.episcopalchurch.org/lectionary-calendar

St. John's Church Website

St. John's has a new and improved website. Check it out! URL: **www.stjohnsnohomish.org**.

St. John's Church Book Club

We are organizing an online book club. Keep checking the Friday email for details.

January 2021

Turned

By Sharon Hall

A corner.
Into chaos and shock and rage and fear
Struggling
To understand.
Away from gatherings and family and friends and...
What we know.
What we have always known.
And asking, "Did we? Did we really know it?"
"It", the days, the ordinary, the expected,
The morning, kids, family, job, routine
The everything.
Blindfolded, turned and turned and turned and stopped.
Looking now. Not there. The knowing. Gone.
Turned into a different today.
Gone.
Turned.
And now we hope, dare we?
We have been turned and turned.
Now we wait.
And what we find, we hope has not turned
So far
That we have lost too much in the turning.
To turn back. To begin anew.

Building Construction Project Report

by John Gray

The structural repair of the steeple is done. The interior work in the narthex that is below the steeple is paused for the work of the new connecting building. If the narthex interior is done now, a lot of that will be demolished for the new construction. The exterior of the steeple needs some siding replaced and needs to be painted. That work is not funded yet. Therefore, it is not on the current planning horizon.

Repair and replacement of the electrical system is moving forward with the PUD preparing to move the live feed from the old wiring to the new service. The electric stove in the kitchen is a unique commercial appliance that uses three-phase power. That level of electrical power is unusual in a church. The option that prior vestries have not chosen is to use a natural gas stove that

would require a substantial ventilation hood and fire suppression system.

The progress on the new ventilation project is paused pending the permitting of the new addition to the parish hall, the new addition, and the first-floor spaces.

The parish hall project is in the design and engineering phase. We expect drawings to be done by mid-January. This building was prepared for repair work when Dawn Peyton organized the storage and disposal of the contents in all the rooms. The next phase is finding a contractor and applying for permits from the city. We invited designated contractors to tour the project. Steve Kenagy met with two contractors. When drawings are done, the contractors may submit a bid.

January 2021

A Blessing of Solitude

by John O'Donohue

May you recognize in your life the presence,
power and light of your soul.

May you realize that you are never alone,
that your soul in its brightness and belonging
connects you intimately with the rhythm of the universe.

May you have respect for your own individuality and difference.

May you realize that the shape of your soul is unique,
that you have a special destiny here,

that behind the facade of your life
there is something beautiful, good, and eternal happening.

May you learn to see your self with the same delight,
pride, and expectation with which God sees you in every moment.

From Jesus Wisdom

by Cynthia Bougeault

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

What does righteousness mean? We tend to think of it as virtue-morality-correct behavior. In Jesus time it meant to be grounded in God's own aliveness, a live wire that connects us to God. Hunger and thirst is about that moment of satisfying, connection and transformation, of being filled and we find it to be reciprocal. Jesus desires our connection in this fundamental yearning as though we were hungry or thirsty. In our time we are rarely hungry or thirsty physically. Shall we look inside for the spiritual emptiness and have it be filled?

Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy.

The root of mercy is "merc" an Etruscan word giving us merchant and commerce. It is about exchange. Exchange is the nature of divine life-the holy giving and receiving as in, "Lord have Mercy." There is a flow of relationship. In the Lord's prayer we say, "Save me from the time of trial." Jesus invites us into this flow with God.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

What does this make us think? Clean? Undefined? Sometime we think in sexual terms as with chastity or celibacy. In Jesus wisdom, purity means singleness as in blessed are those whose hearts are not divided, whose hearts are a unified whole. In this unifying concept we become one enlightened mind to heart. Mind to heart complete, in our understanding and reciprocity with God. We are blessed by the promise of Covenant.

This page submitted by Eleanor Church

From the Deacon's Desk

by The Rev. Liz Van Dyke

In the Diocese of Olympia, we have about 30 active deacons and many of us are over the age of 65. Since last March, we have been gathering regularly on Zoom to be enriched by one another as we wade the deep waters of the worldwide pandemic that has had a major impact on our lives and ministries. I encourage you to read through the liturgy for The Ordination of a Deacon beginning on page 537 in The Book of Common Prayer. The Examination of the diaconal ordinand (pg. 543) explains the overall ministry of the deacon and is followed by the vows that a deacon will live by for the rest of his or her life.

The community of the Deacons in the Diocese of Olympia have two special gatherings each year. One is the Annual Deacon Retreat with Bishop Rickel, which is usually held in the early spring. The other is a Deacon Gathering that usually occurs in the fall. As you are quite aware, we had to do things differently during 2020 to avoid meeting in person. I would have had to drive for about five hours to get to the retreat. Driving is not my favorite thing to do! So, instead of the retreat, in the spring and summer of 2020, we had a special two-day virtual workshop. This was a real gift for me and has guided much of my study and prayer over these several months. It was such a special gift that I feel compelled to share part of this with you here.

We began with a discussion centered on the Seven Desires of the Human Heart. These are:

- To be heard and understood
- To be affirmed
- To be blessed
- To be safe
- To be touched
- To be chosen
- To be included



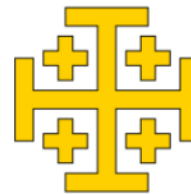
We each asked ourselves, and I encourage you to do the same: What is the deepest desire of my heart? Examine: what it looks like, what it feels like, what it smells like, what it tastes like, and what it sounds like. All of the human senses are involved in this self-examination. This is a wonderful exercise to really get in touch with what motivates you and what you seek in relationship with others. As the deacons discussed this exercise, it was determined that we need to value all of our desires and seek ways in which we honor these in ourselves and all of God's children.

Depending on our individual circumstances, such as whether we live alone or with family, we may find this to be challenging, especially during this time of distancing and isolation due to the pandemic. The deacons agree that it is important to remain active, even if we are at home and unable to participate in most of the activities that are integral parts of the ministry to which we are all called as Christians.

I encourage you to set aside some holy time each day to engage in self-reflection, read over our Baptismal Covenant, and pray that our Loving God will guide us all through this time of change and bring us all safely to the day we will gather again.

Blessings,

Deacon Liz



Environmental Geek—What to Do With All Your Unwanted Stuff

by Nancy Vandenberg

How did I become the Environmental Geek?

I think it all started long ago with recycling, and really dates back to the first Earth Day, when we had some kind of Earth Day club led by my beloved chemistry teacher, Miss Carraba.

So, recycling seems like a logical topic to cover, because even with all the many words that have been devoted to recycling by many people, it still seems to be a major source of confusion. This is because what is recyclable changes with the markets. Also, different companies have different guidelines. Please don't throw your hands up in despair, though I admit that I don't know everything either. But read on for what I DO know. Next month I will cover what to do with reusable items. Don't throw anything away in the meantime!

Curbside Recycling

First topic: Curbside recycling. A lot of people seem to think that just about everything can go in here—please, nooooo! Other countries are getting more selective about taking our cast-offs, since not everything can be recycled easily. The best source of info is your recycling pamphlet that your recycling company mailed you. Lost it? Look up your waste company online, and find out what is recyclable, what is garbage, and what is compost.

Waste Management (www.wm.com/) has a spot where you can look up specific items. And please—items should be clean and dry.



wm.com

I learned so much touring the Waste Management recycling facility. Twice. It was SO interesting. (Clearly you can see why I am called the Environmental Geek.) My biggest take-away—do NOT bag your recyclables in plastic bags. They gum up the equipment and just make it harder to handle. Just throw your items in the recycle bin—they should be clean and dry anyway (see previous paragraph, not to nag or anything).

Other Recycle Items

Don't stop at curbside recycling. There are places to recycle many other items.

Plastic bags: Grocery stores—usually they have a collection point just inside. Of course, it's best to bring your own bags, and I also have mesh bags for my produce.



Unsplash.com

Old electronics: Best Buy takes virtually anything with a cord—check out their website. Many Goodwill locations also recycle old computers and such.

(Continued on page 9)

Styrofoam: Look for local recycling events. The nearest facility is in Renton, so if you are making a trip to Ikea, gather up your neighbor's Styrofoam and drop it off.

Hazardous yard care items or cleaners: Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off—3434 McDougall Ave, Everett. Open Wednesday–Saturday. They also take CFL bulbs (you can also take these to Bartell's), batteries, aerosol cans, oil-based paint, propane tanks, etc. Free and super-easy. Definitely the places to take things that should not go in the garbage.

Plastic plant pots: Many nurseries take these back.

Recycling as much as possible saves landfill space and also saves fuel used to haul that garbage to the landfill that is 360 miles away. Every day over 2000 tons of Snohomish country garbage gets shipped there. Maybe start by recycling one category of items you haven't before. We can all make a difference—without even having to leave home.

And Miss Carraba would be proud.

Quotes

Never economize on luxuries.

Angela Thirkell

Argue for your limitations, and sure enough they're yours.

Richard Bach

Antagonize any situation and you give it power against yourself. Offer mental nonresistance and it crumbles away in front of you.

Emmet Fox

A morning glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books.

Walt Whitman

There is nothing more thrilling in this world I think than having a child that's yours and yet is a mystery and a stranger.

Agatha Christie

Your life is an occasion, rise to it.

Dustin Hoffman

With childhood comes a brief grace period of ignorant bliss—when you're not aware of the pain around you. That is the most special, truly unique time. It is the core of adult lament.

Saying on a Starbuck's cup

submitted by Sharon Monks

The Good Old Days (pre-COVID)



Photos by Bill Tygret

January 2021

Mass in Times of a Pandemic

by Dave Baldwin

Kyrie eleison

Have mercy upon the people of faith, O Lord,
who put their trust in you, as an enemy, unseen
and silent, steals across our land and the world
abroad to tap on shoulders—as if at random
like a monstrous game of tag—of unsuspecting men
and women who strive to make it through the day.

We sing, *Kyrie eléison, Christe eléison,*
Kyrie eléison, with great gladness; and we pray:
Give us courage, O Lord, come what may.

Gloria

We shoulder sorrows at the end of a darkened day,
seeking shelter against the forces of the night,
and in the lengthening shadows we find our way
to the empty tomb of Christ with the perpetual light
of one hopeful candle burning bright
to celebrate the risen Lord. We look to the west:
the glow of the golden sun gives way to the light
of vespers. Secure in our safe lodging, we are blessed
to praise the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Credo

How did the Coronavirus disaster come? Two ways:
gradually, then suddenly. Science knew it was real
and lethal, but leadership dithered for many days
until a great nation was brought to heel.
Worse than war, we tumbled down into the hell
of separateness. Each of us must suffer alone,
apart from the warmth of fellowship in which we feel
a common bond. But we shall rise again!
Even in isolation, we are one unbroken chain.

Sanctus

The virus requires we find new ways to cope.
Gatherings are banned; individuals widen their space.
In isolation, we glimpse in memory, dimly, but we hope
to see each other soon face to face,
cheek by jowl, in a happier time and place.
Privately, we pray, *Holy, holy, holy,*
Lord God of hosts. By the loving grace
of God, we plan to come together fully
as one body and sing the Hymn of Victory.

Agnes Dei

*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away
the sins of the world.* We the faithful may be sheep
in need of a good shepherd or innocents in the ways
of the world, but the body of Christ is wide and deep
and the people of this church have commitments to keep
whether blown to the four winds or gathered in place.
We are set on sowing in the Spirit—in the hope of reaping
eternal life. My friends, go in grace
until we meet again face to face.

