



THE BULLETIN

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
An Episcopal Community in the Heart of Houston, Texas

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Making Our Home for Faith

When Canon Vicar Kathy Rock Pfister started work at Christ Church Cathedral a few months ago, the church was already learning to adapt to new ways of worship in the face of COVID-19. However, a seasonal booklet for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter that Pfister helped create at Austin's Church of the Good Shepherd served as a seed for a new Cathedral project. The 'Making Our Home For Faith' booklet will debut this fall.

"As [COVID-19] continues, we thought now is a vitally important time to develop spiritual

practices at home," Pfister said. "This is for our own well-being, [to] nurture our spirits without a screen."

She says that the booklet is meant to supplement both virtual worship and activities, as ministry staff are integrating it into their fall programming.

In his introduction to the booklet, which includes simple liturgies, spiritual practices, and a collection of prayers for daily living, **Dean Barkley Thompson** uses The Acts of the Apostles

FOR FAITH, page 6

Take only memories; leave only footprints

In late July, **Jill** and I loaded up the car and drove cross country, responsibly mask-wearing and social distancing all along the way, to the mountains of Western North Carolina. I served one Sunday as the chaplain for All Saints Episcopal Church in Linville, North Carolina, but we mostly relaxed, enjoyed cool mountain air, and strenuously hiked.



THE VERY REV.
BARKLEY
THOMPSON

Jill and I fell in love with the Appalachians and with day hiking during the years we lived in Roanoke, Virginia. I grew up in the delta of Eastern Arkansas, and we now live in lovely but flat Houston, so the rise of the ancient Blue Ridge holds a kind of grace for me. Whether hiking up to an overlook to gaze at an awesome vista or down to a waterfall to watch the powerful flow of eons over smoothed rock, for me the presence of God is palpable in that milieu.

This time in the mountains, I was reminded of a comment a former parishioner once made to me. He said, "While hiking the Appalachian Trail, we would often encounter a rustic wooden sign on which was scrawled the motto of the trail: 'Take only memories; leave only footprints.' Those words taught us how to behave in the wilderness."

This seems to me also to teach us how to live always in the world. Each of us is here only a little while, and we have the God-given power, especially in times of collective stress and strain such as the days in which we are living, to make our impact on the world positive and leave no scars through our actions, words, or passive neglect.

When I was researching the background of the Appalachian Trail motto,

FOOTPRINTS, page 3

The Meaning of Generosity

BY KAREN KRAYCIRIK, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
AND MINISTER FOR STEWARDSHIP

Each year, Christ Church Cathedral's Stewardship Council prayerfully plans the upcoming Every Member Canvass. The Every Member Canvass (aka EMC) is the annual fundraising campaign that supports the mission and ministry of the Cathedral by inviting every member of the parish to pledge their time, talent, and treasure the upcoming year. As this year's EMC approaches, members of the Stewardship Council reflected on ways that they have witnessed generosity and how it has shaped their views of our church community.

All of us encounter inspiration to give through shared experiences with others. **Gay Gullede**, new to the council this year, reflected on one of her most memorable instances: helping with Rally Against

GENEROSITY, page 7



Karen Kraycirk serves with other volunteers at The Beacon.

OUR CATHEDRAL FAMILY

We celebrate with

- ✠ New members **Elaine d'Lys McClurkan** and **Tom and Jolyn McLaughlin**

The flowers on the Cathedral Altar

- ✠ on July 26 were given to the glory of God in loving memory of **Edgar and Margot Hagstette** by their sons, **Guy and Eric**.
- ✠ on July 26 were also given to the glory of God in loving memory of **John C. Hooker** by his family.
- ✠ on July 26 were also given to the glory of God in loving memory of her mother **Cherry Gulledege**, by **Gay Gulledege**.
- ✠ on August 9 were given to the glory of God in loving memory of **John's** father, **Charles Thomas Unger**.
- ✠ on September 13 are given to the glory of God in loving memory of **Thomas E. Cobb and Jennifer E. Cobb**.
- ✠ On September 27 are given to the Glory of God in loving memory of **Lisa Ardoin Albright** by **Anne, Brynne, Joe II, and Joe Albright**.

The flowers in the floor vases

- ✠ on August 16 were given to the glory of God in honor of **Barbara Barnes** in celebration of her 70th birthday by her family.

Cathedral Roundtable Discussion returns with ecological thelogy

During our COVID crisis many have taken time to re-connect their appreciation for nature with their spiritual self, taking comfort and inspiration from God's beautiful creation. The upcoming roundtable is centered on helping participants reclaim their connection to the natural world and sacred universe. The more we know about the Earth, the more we can care for it.

The roundtable begins its adventure in ecological thelogy guided by the Cathedral's own **Alan Jackson**, both a geophysicist and astrophysicist, who has long been interested

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

See the Program Guide
insert for details

in the intersection of science and theology. He has spent time trying to reconcile the two worlds and will walk us through the ways in which current science can support

an environmental theology.

The class will explore the emergence of the ecological movement and its leaders, and participants can expect to develop a better understanding of the workings of Earth itself, its evolution, and its ecosystems. The purpose of the class is to call us back to a more authentic mode of being as we reclaim our interdependence and deep connection to the natural world as sacred creation. This in turn will help us participate with greater awareness in what **Thomas Berry** calls "The Great Work" of our century, "our historical destiny of creating a mutually enhancing mode of human dwelling on the planet."

Join us for monthly gatherings beginning in September. For more information contact **The Rev Betty Adam** at bettycadam@comcast.net



THE REV. KATHY PFISTER



THE REV. BETTY ADAM

How can I keep from singing?

ROBERT SIMPSON, CANON FOR MUSIC

Robert Lowry (1826–1899) was a well-regarded Baptist minister in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. While his sermons drew large crowds, it was through his hymns that he reached his biggest audience. "Shall we gather at the river" is his best-known hymn, but the culminating phrase of a later work has lingered in my mind since early March — "How can I keep from singing?"

Stifled without warning, choirs have fallen silent and singers have been identified as "super spreaders." But that hasn't stopped the Choirs of Christ Church Cathedral from remaining engaged and active.

Without missing a beat, the Cathedral Choirs organized weekly Thursday evening Zoom gatherings. For 30 minutes we've shared news and enjoyed each other's company. This is the sort of thing we looked forward to during our rehearsal breaks, and to me, it is just as vital to a successful rehearsal as the music. The

Zoom format actually provides an opportunity for the Parish and Cathedral Choirs to visit in a way that was never possible in person since one choir was adjourning as the next assembled. A recent addition to these get-togethers has provided me with the opportunity to share some of my favorite pieces with the choirs. I fully anticipate that others in the choirs will do the same in coming weeks.

But meeting is not singing. We had to find a way to make music together even if not at the same time and in the same room. Enter the magic of virtual choirs! This method of assembling individual recordings into a single performance has been around for a number of years, but few knew anything about making one until the pandemic. Cathedral Choir members are now veterans of the medium



Cathedral Organist Daryl Robinson plays the opening voluntary during Sunday worship.

having already made two virtual choir recordings with a third in the works.

The process starts with a video filmed as **Daryl Robinson** plays and I conduct the piece to be sung by the choir. That video is then shared with several members of the choir who record their individual soprano, alto, tenor, or bass voice parts. This composite video is then sent on to the full choir to sing along with as they record their individual tracks. This is no small

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Quarterly Vestry Update

While it seems like a lifetime ago, in October 2018 I spent several days in a very intense leadership course and learned some interesting things about people, leading teams, and myself. One of the key things I learned and have tried hard to follow in these unusual times, is to listen better, with empathy, and to get over myself and my own views of how things should be done. The instructor was a fan of **Leonard Cohen**, the Canadian poet and singer, and he wrapped up our class with a verse from Cohen's well-known song "Anthem." Its message of hope and light in darkness helped me to see myself differently in 2018, and resonates with me in many new ways now:

*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.*



ROB REEDY
SENIOR WARDEN

The Cathedral staff has initiated many new ways to bring that light to all of us despite our physical remoteness. One of the most obvious has been the use of live streaming and conferencing technologies, which has interestingly caused attendance to increase in many of our programs. And we have been blessed with the arrival of several new staff members, including most recently **The Rev. Kathy Pfister**, the new Canon Vicar, and a new Minister for Communications, **Brant Mills**.

Undertaking the change to virtual worship and service to the congregation and the community was a huge challenge for the staff. (Well done!) The challenge is still there for all of us to stay connected. So, I encourage you to take note of just a few of the opportunities to connect in the near future, and I expect that there is a lot more coming up as the Cathedral staff continues to find new ways to bring us together and fulfill our missions:

- I hope you joined in this year's Rally Day which took place virtually on Sunday, August 30, and provided new and innovative ways to connect as a community.
- Keep in mind the Latino Ministry's Yard Sale will be held on September 12. Be on the lookout for ways to support their work.
- The new Vision Action Plan for the Cathedral will be shared with the congregation on Sunday, September 20, during the 2 p.m. Dean's Hour. The vision action plan was approved by the vestry at the vestry retreat in February. We are excited to share with the congregation the directional components that will guide our ministry over the next five years.
- The Vestry will conduct their annual comfort calls during the months of September and October. Look for a call from a vestry member in these months and let us know how we're doing.
- **Dean Thompson's** sermon from Sunday, August 2, offers some comfort to us in this very strange time. Like him, I love the story of Jacob at the Jabbok and often think of his Dean's Hour class about Jacob. I especially liked the quote below from his sermon (you can watch it on the website of course). Try to understand his point elsewhere in the sermon about "the struggle being the blessing." (Not easy to do in a pandemic!)

"Whether Laban catches up to us or Esau's murderous memory remains hot, God is with us. No matter what, we never struggle alone. That is what propels me forward. That is what gives me hope that runs deeper than any anxiety."

Take care, find the light coming through the cracks in everything, and stay tuned for more on how we can connect.

FOOTPRINTS, from cover

I came across a quote from a blogger who goes by **Visar**. She asks and answers, "Angels: Why do they fly? It's because they travel lightly, not disturbing but beautifying their paths and the places they visit." I love that. Psalm 8 says to God, "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, that you care for them? You have made them but a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor." Surely, we can follow the lead of our cousins the angels and seek to add grace and beauty to the lives and places we visit.

Such living requires attention, commitment, and — most of all — a will to love before all else. Retired priest and my friend, the **Rev. Tom Mustard**, composed a blessing that he pronounces at the end of every Holy Eucharist. It sums up perfectly the spiritual practices necessary to live lightly and with grace in the world:

"Be careful as you go into God's creation, for it does not belong to you. Be gentle with yourself and others, for we are the dwelling place of the Most High. Be alert and be silent, for God is a whisper. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen."



Participants in virtual VBS show off their googly eyes and other materials delivered to families who signed up to attend.

Virtual VBS creates new connections

KARIANN LESSNER, MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

What do you get when you put four children's ministers from three large Episcopal Houston churches together on a project? Lightning in a bottle!

In April when each of us (**Deanna Lawson** of St. John the Divine, **Ursella Rylander** and **Holli Knight** of St. Martin's, and **Kari-Ann Lessner**, of Christ Church Cathedral) realized separately that summer was going to look a LOT different from our original plans — we scrapped our individual campaigns and put our hands in to work together on a joint Virtual VBS (vacation bible school) called FOCUS.

The plan was to make a virtual version of VBS available to families in our three churches. Music, story, prayers and memory verse would be featured in a thirty-five-minute opening every morning. Supplemental videos for crafts, games, and prayer corner were available on demand on the vbs4all.com website. It sounded like so much fun, and we were working together. And then it hit us — all

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Summer Shade, VBS, Virtual Summer Place, and more

IN PICTURES

Below left. below right: Summer Shade
Left: VBS.



Below: Virtual Summer Place





Authors Becky Zartman and James Franklin discuss their book “Belovedness: Finding God (and Self) on Campus.”



Above: A young church member reads The Bulletin.
Left: VBS.



FOR FAITH, from cover

for example. The earliest Christians, he noted, drew on the patterns of Jewish observance and integrated faith into every aspect of daily living.

“Our current moment invites us to rediscover the practice of faith in our homes and to consider more intentionally the daily rhythm of our souls,” the Dean said.

A sub-committee of the Adult Formation Council, the Children and Family Council, and the ministry staff of the Cathedral created “Making Our Home For Faith.”

Celeste Gardner Geldreich, who heads up the Adult Formation Council, said that one of its goals is to help people develop spiritual practices.

“I’m excited about how this booklet can help people do that,” Gardner Geldreich said.

As a crowdsourced document, Pfister said it is “an eclectic mixture of practices, liturgies, [and] prayers” that makes it more accessible as a whole.

One contributor was **Anne Flanagan**, a lifelong Episcopalian, who is also a member of the Adult Formation Council booklet sub-committee. She shared her thoughts about ways to increase faith.

“It’s important to be active in your faith and to grow your faith,” Flanagan said.

Flanagan uses the analogy of Soul Food — an appetizer, an entrée, and dessert — which she said made sense to her.

“Our souls are living entities and need a bit of nourishment from us to survive, and a bit more than a little to thrive,” she writes in the booklet.

The three-step process to nourish a soul includes a time for meditation, study, and then reaching out to put your faith into practice.

For her contributed prayers, Flanagan said she walked around her house for a number of days with a tablet and wrote about what came to her, including prayers of protection and peace.

“In my personal prayer life, I just talk to God,” she said.

Will and **Susan Dugat** offered some of the children’s prayers.

“When Canon Pfister approached us we embraced the opportunity to connect with our larger Cathedral family,” Will Dugat said.

Dugat said inspiration came from their two young sons, **Liam** and **Jason**.

“We wanted to include some prayers in words they use and things they think about,” Dugat said. “Liam and Jason have participated in weekly chapel, Zoom Sunday School, and VBS this summer, and it has been wonderful to see their curiosity and excitement grow.”

Minister for Children and Families **Kari-Ann Lessner** is doing a companion podcast for the booklet, which for the fall will focus on



The Cathedral wins Polly Bond Best Campaign for third year

For the third time (second year in a row), Christ Church Cathedral has won Best Campaign at the annual Episcopal Communicators national awards — this year for Rally Against Hunger. Typically, these awards take place in May at the annual Episcopal Communicators Conference, but due to COVID-19 that conference was delayed until the first week of August. Of all the award categories, Best Campaign is the most comprehensive, requiring several instances of strategic, integrated multimedia. Christ Church Cathedral’s Chief Administrative Officer Karen Kraycirik said “thank you and congratulations to each and every member of the staff at Christ Church Cathedral, as it truly took a village to bring the Rally Against Hunger campaign to life.” This prestigious award was won previously by The Cathedral for the Cigna Sunday Streets event (2019) and the Turn Towards Love campaign (2017).

the spiritual practice of Compline (or Night Prayer) before moving to Advent.

“We want to help equip the parents who are the primary spiritual leaders and meet them where greatest need is,” Lessner said. “Sometimes I need an example of what that looks like, to walk it out with my own kids.”

Lessner said that a different family will pray Compline each week, and that other families are invited to listen one time or every night. She likened it to the Waltons listening to the radio, while winding down for the evening.

Minister for Community Life **Bethany Podgorny** has made playlists to go along with the document that will be clickable on the online PDF version of the document.

“Part of being at the Cathedral that a lot of people miss is hearing the music,” Podgorny said. “A playlist of songs the choir often sings and hymns that the whole parish sings together is not a replacement, but hopefully it brings a little joy to folks at home.”

Podgorny said that one featured playlist includes recordings made by musicians at the Cathedral, including ‘Duruflé: Complete Choral Works,’ **Robert Simpson’s** Grammy Award-winning album from the Houston Chamber Choir, as well as **Daryl Robinson’s** album ‘American Fantasia,’ and songs by the Treble Choir of Houston conducted by **Mari-anna Parnas-Simpson**. There are playlists too for kids in both English and Spanish.

Pfister said that overall, the goal was to keep the material simple with prayers specific to this moment in time. The title of the booklet, “Making Our Home for Faith,” is intended to encourage a spirit of solidarity.

“We’re all in this together,” she said. “In this time of ambiguity, [it’s about] getting grounded where you live. If families just found one thing they did as a family that nurtured faith at home, that would be incredible. When you ask the Holy Spirit to show up, (s)he shows up — I think interesting things will come out of this.”

GENEROSITY, from cover

Hunger. “Not only were dollars raised,” Gullledge shared, “but hundreds of Cathedral members gathered and used their collective hands to assemble 100,000 meals for Houston’s underserved families. It was an unforgettable act of generosity and community.” Many were impacted by the Rally Against Hunger efforts in 2019, beyond those receiving the 100,000 meals.

Sharing stories of kindness can inspire others to be generous. When looking back on an experience with The Giving Tree, the annual youth mission trip fundraiser held in the spring, **Elizabeth Goza** realized that the concentric circles of generosity are unending. The Goza family was impacted by Hurricane Harvey; with support from the Cathedral, family, and friends, they were able to recover and move forward with their lives. The following spring, Goza noticed a photo of Cathedral youth helping clean up their home after Harvey, hanging on The Giving Tree. Attached to the photo was an inspiring donation amount. Goza showed a fellow parishioner the photo, simply to point out the house in the picture. “Next thing I knew, my friend was handing over a credit card to make the suggested donation,” Goza reflects. “Our hardship during Harvey was inspiring generosity that would benefit others in need from Houston to Costa Rica.”

During COVID-19, The Beacon’s expanded service provides two meals a day to Houston’s homeless, which includes a fresh, hot lunch plus a second sack meal — seven days a week. **Mary Swift**, chair of the council, observed, “A particular [homeless] man as he excitedly opened his two containers to see what was inside. He then showed his companions what he had been given, and his face radiated true gratitude and joy. It was a profound moment to witness, of generosity, both received and given, and highlights how our church honors others with dignity and respect.”

Being generous can take many forms, as it is inclusive of both giving and sharing. As council member **Debby Francis** reflects, “There is giving at many levels, and every level is respected and valued.” It takes many gifts, of all shapes and sizes, to make the ministry work of Christ Church Cathedral possible. “Simply ask for help with a reception, items for the Latino Ministry yard sale, volunteers to work at The Beacon, teach Sunday School, help with May Fete, pack 100,000 meals, or call to check on neighbors. These are but a few examples of our members sharing their time and talents,” says **Julie Thurmond**, another council member. The Cathedral community embodies what it means to share Christian generosity in almost every way. “The generosity most impressed upon me is how much of themselves the parishioners are willing to give. Their time, their energy, their resources ... no matter the time or occasion, Christ Church folk are ready and willing to show up and lend a hand,” echoes **George Hawkins**, vestry liaison to the council.

At the end of the month, we’ll kickoff the 2021 Every Member Canvass on Sunday, September 27, at 2 p.m. We’ll share more inspiring stories from fellow parishioners about all the ways Christ Church touches our lives and celebrates through song, looking forward to what is on the horizon. We hope you will join us as we commit together to another year of supporting the mission and ministry of Christ Church Cathedral, and living into the legacy of generosity that has become synonymous with our community.

SINGING, from page 2

feat. They must look at their music, look at the video while listening to the guide track through earphones and sing their part accurately and musically into their cell phone, or other recording device. Just arranging the equipment to accomplish these tasks is daunting. But they have all found a way, and their combined effort and talent have produced two beautiful recordings. The most recent featuring “Dear Lord and Father of mankind” by Hubert Parry has been viewed 6,300 times. Major credit for the success of this production goes to Daryl Robinson, who spent hours editing and synchronizing the video. You can find it on Vimeo and Facebook.

While we will continue to make full use of all the technologies available to us in this strange, silent time, we await that glorious moment when we can once again assemble, rehearse, and join our voices with yours in the beauty of Christ Church Cathedral. Until then Robert Lowry’s words reassures us that “thro’ all the tumult and the strife I hear the music ringing — it finds an echo in my soul — How can I keep from singing?”

Coming Out in Church conversation

On October 10, from 10 a.m. to noon, the Justice and Peace Council of the Cathedral will host a Coming Out in Church conversation via Zoom webinar. In spite of broader public acceptance and increased legal protections for the LGBTQ+ community in recent years, many LGBTQ+ individuals continue to experience marginalization in society and sometimes in church. This year’s forum will focus on the experience of married LGBTQ+ Christians in the church. The Coming Out in Church program strives to create a safe space for conversation about the experiences and challenges facing LGBTQ+ individuals, their families, and friends. Join us for this free event in an open and inviting environment where all are welcome and there are no “dumb questions.” Register for this event online at bit.ly/comingoutinchurchCCC



Cathedral communications survey

As part of our assessment of the efficacy and effectiveness of Cathedral communications, we ask that you fill out our anonymous survey online. It should only take 5–10 minutes depending on the amount of information you choose to provide. All questions are voluntary and you can skip any questions you do not feel comfortable answering or that don’t apply to you. We will only use the answers provided to gain a better understanding of our audiences and your preferences. We appreciate your time and any input you can offer. Please complete the survey at: bit.ly/CCCSurveyB





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Did you know you can read **The Bulletin** on our website? If you'd like to go "online-only," contact Ramona Sikes at rsikes@christchurchcathedral.org or call her at 713-590-3301.

Providing comfort and joy

Calling all knitters and crocheters! For many years, the Cathedral's Prayer Shawl ministry has delivered prayerfully created shawls and baby blankets to Cathedral members who are challenged by illness or celebrating the birth of a child. The Pastoral Care Council invites you to join us as we develop and expand this ministry and create an exciting and fun new community within the Cathedral. We even need your help in selecting a name for our group!

To get started, we will meet together via Zoom this autumn from 10–11 a.m. on the third Saturday of each month. The dates are: September 19, October 17, and November 21. Bring your coffee and whatever yarn-based project you are working on, and we'll discuss ideas for future projects while we work.

All levels of experience are welcome. Don't know how to knit or crochet? As soon as we can meet again in person, we plan to offer lessons. For now, our focus is on establishing community and providing comfort and joy to parishioners with our favorite shawl, baby blanket, and lap blanket patterns.

For more information or to join in the fun, please contact **Catherine Whitney**, pastoral care council member at: catherine.whitney@att.net or **Jody Gillit**, minister for pastoral care at jgillit@christchurchcathedral.org.



Courtesy photo by Chloe and Tim Vale

VBS, from page 3

of us, that as the three largest Episcopal churches in Houston, we should be resource parishes for other churches. Our diocese put out the call to rectors and directors of Christian Education, inviting them to join us, virtually. And then the net was thrown wider still, through the national FORMA Facebook page (a network for Christian formation) and before we knew it, thirty-eight parishes from our diocese, and seven other dioceses around the nation joined in. At last count there were more than 5,000 views of our videos.

The week was so different from anything we'd ever done before. For one thing, there wasn't a child in sight. We all hammed it up for the camera-men knowing that on the other side of that feed there were living rooms, front yards, and classrooms with kids dancing and singing right along with us. I'm not gonna lie; a room full of adults dressed in shirts sporting the word FOCUS, along with tutus on Tuesday and wacky hair on Wednesday is pretty funny. We sang and danced to awesome music, heard the stories of the Bible that drew our focus to what God is doing in the world around us. And on the last day after the confetti cannon shot off and the last note faded away, Holli turned to the rest of us and said, "Okay... what's next?" Who knows what God will lead us to do together next. I do know one thing though; lightning in a bottle is a gracious gift. My life and ministry have been so blessed by the time I've shared creating, planning, and sharing God alongside these ladies.