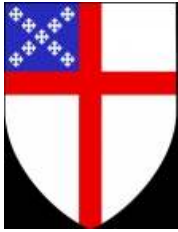


Phone: 360-249-3281

Website: www.stmarksmonte.com



Rev. Lorraine Dierick, Priest
Rev. Bonnie Campbell, Priest
Rev. Dorothy McMeekin, Deacon
Rev. Joyce Avery, Deacon
Corby Varness, Preacher
Jim Campbell, Preacher
Sarah Monroe, Seminarian

Worship
Sundays at 10 a.m.

St. Mark's Newsletter

Click on Newsletters in the middle left of our Home Page.

St. Mark's Church Video

Click on St. Mark's Video in the upper right of our Home Page.

St. Mark's Sermons

All of the sermons from our Sunday worship services are placed on our website to be read and studied further within a couple of days of being preached on Sundays. Click on Recent Sermons in the middle right of our Home Page.

St. Mark's Bishop's Committee Minutes

A list of all meeting minutes from 2009 on is found below the Upcoming Meeting Agenda. Click on Administration in the middle left of our Home Page, then click on BC Meeting Minutes in the right side of the page

Adult Bible Study
Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

ST. MARK EPISCOPAL CHURCH
124 NORTH SYLVIA STREET
PO BOX 533
MONTESANO, WA 98563

Continuing Activities

Weekly Bible Study, Wednesdays, 10:00AM at St. Mark's

Our weekly Bible study generally uses the weekly Lectionary readings used in the Sunday worship services—no preparation is needed! Please join us for this study each week from 10:00-11:30AM at the church.

Feed Your Spirit Book Club--Monthly on Third Mondays, 12 Noon

Our monthly book club meets on the third Monday each month. We read a new book each month and discuss each one for an hour (or more as some might feel led to do, over your brown bag lunch).

Invite your friends and neighbors to join us! The webpage is at:

<http://www.stmarksmonte.com/article.php?id=193>

St. Mark's History Books for Sale

To purchase a copy, please contact Jim Campbell at jbcmonte@comcast.net or by phone at 360-612-0205. Webpage is at: <http://www.stmarksmonte.com/article.php?id=167>

Upcoming Events

Mother's Day Sunday (5/13/2012), at St. Mark's

Roses are the decorations, and the gift for all women who attend this Sunday's service. Please bring short written out remembrances of our mothers to be blessed.

Pentecost Sunday Celebration (5/27/2012), at St. Mark's

We will be celebrating the birth of the church, with the Holy Spirit and Red everywhere! A community reading of the first part of Acts 2, describing the Holy Spirit coming upon the large gathering of believers in Jerusalem, will be featured. And, we will also be collecting donations of buying "bricks" for rebuilding Trinity Cathedral in Haiti.

Trinity Sunday-Visitation by Rev. Janet Campbell (6/3/2012), at St. Mark's

We will be visited the Rev. Janet Campbell, Canon for Liturgy for the Diocese of Olympia, to worship with us and see how we conduct our services in our new worship space. She will also meet at fellowship time to discuss with us our questions and ideas about what we might want to change, going forward. We ask all to think about what they like and also what they have issues with (in the context of an Episcopal worship tradition) with our services. After church on May 20th, we will have a potluck meal and talk about this prior to Rev. Campbell's visit.

Recent News

Easter Sunday Service & Easter Egg Hunt (4/8/2012), at St. Mark's

A half way sunny day greeted us for the celebration of the risen Christ. Bells, flowers, candles and much singing and saying of "Alleluias" were part of our worship, as well as lots of smiles and thankful prayers. After the service, fellowship, lots of great sweets, and an egg hunts for 5 kids was held.

Pictures are at: <http://www.stmarksmonte.com/article/319/about-us/upcoming-events-recent-news/2012-events/easter-sunday-2012>.

Easter Season Events at St. Mark's:

Palm Sunday Communion Service: April 1st, 10:00AM—reading the Passion story & blessed the palms.
Maundy Thursday Communion Service: April 5th, 6:30PM—included foot washing like Jesus did for his disciples, and a meal after the service.

Good Friday Service: April 6th, 12:00 noon at St. Mark's.

Good Friday Ecumenical Service: April 6th, 7:00PM at the Montesano Church of God.

Lenten Season Events:

--Lenten Lunch/Prayer Series (Fridays in Lent), 11:30am , at Various Churches in Montesano

For the 2nd year the Montesano Ministerial Association sponsored the Lenten Lunch Series on the Fridays during Lent. Lunches of soup were served beginning at 11:30 with a short 30 minute service beginning at 12:15. Several at St. Mark's helped with this series, including hosting, leading the services, and writing articles for the local newspaper, The Vidette.

--Ash Wednesday Service (2/22/2012), 6pm, at St. Mark's

A service of the imposition of ashes and communion, followed by a wonderful soups and bread meal to begin Lent was held.

Summary of St. Mark's Finances—4/22/2012

Net Operating Year to Date— -\$168.47 (last month--\$253.83)

Total Operating Expenses--\$7904.04 (last month--\$5,740.32)

- Highlights—All bills paid current.
- Outreach to Date--\$1205 Diocesan Assessment Required/Paid--\$873

Total Operating Revenues--\$7,736.47 (last month--\$5,994.15)

- About \$500 behind on pledge revenues for the year. Also, short about \$250 in plate income so far. There is enough to cover normal bills and other expenses at this point.

Non-Operating Revenues--\$1,206.56 Non-Operating Expenses--\$46.91

Net Non-Operating Year to Date— +\$1,159.65

Net All Operating and Non-Operating Year to Date---+\$991.18

Funds Summary—Total is \$21,673.89 (last month--\$21,813.18)

- General/Designated Checking Account—\$2,745.27 (last month--\$3,167.59)
- General/Designated Savings Account--\$518.31 (last month--\$518.29)
 - Operating Fund (General)--\$3,667.56 (last month--\$4,089.86)
 - History Book Fund (Designated)--\$-653.98 (last month--\$-653.98)
 - Seminary/Education Fund (Designated)--\$250.00 (last month--\$250.00)
- Memorial Fund/Savings Account--\$985.49 (last month--\$985.37)
- Diocesan Investment Fund--\$16,679.94 (last month--16,329.92)
- Clergy Discretionary Fund/Checking Account--\$744.88 (last month--\$712.01)

Reasons to Be Episcopalian (from the book of 101 Reasons, compiled by Louie Crew)

86 Catholic, without the pope, and with the women; protestant without the gloom. *Catherine Gallouet, Diocese of Rochester*

87 We don't have all the answers, and we welcome others who love the questions. *The Rev. Wilifred Allen-Faiella, Diocese of Southeast Florida*

88 The Bible says we should make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Laughter is as joyful a noise as you'll hear and there's a lot of it in an Episcopal church. *David Hunter, Diocese of East Tennessee*

89 I don't know why anyone would become a member of a crazy church like ours, but I am a Christian of a peculiarly sacramental sort because of something that happened when I was thirteen. My parents sent me off to Christ School near Asheville, North Carolina, and on the first Sunday the boys were lined up and marched into chapel, which was quickly filling up with smoke (under the direction of a senior named Terry Holmes). Some of the new boys passed out, and had to be dragged out onto the lawn to recover, but I stayed, survived, and loved it. *Ormonde Plater, Diocese of Louisiana*

90 Episcopalianism don't tend to be demonstrative, no one expects you to shout Amen or hallelujah! On the other hand, it's OK if you do. *Donna H. Barthle, Diocese of Central Pennsylvania*

Only We Can Rebuild the Church!

The Diocese of Haiti is one of the largest (and poorest) dioceses of the Episcopal Church. A member of Province II, the Diocese of Haiti is home to nearly 100,000 members, 97 churches, and over 200 Episcopal schools. The earthquake of January 2010 wiped out 70% of Episcopal Church buildings in a country where per capita income is \$480.

In times of trouble, people turn to the church. Within days of the earthquake in Haiti, people flocked to parishes and Episcopal schools for food, water, and a safe place to stay. Bishop Duracin and his priests passed out tents and clothing to a crowd that grew to 3,000 before temporary housing could be found.

In Haiti, many of the services people associate with the government, such as education and medical care, are provided by the Episcopal Church. Imagine the difficulty of leading nearly 100,000 faithful during a crisis without functioning headquarters.

There is governmental and NGO aid available to help rebuild housing, clinics, and schools, but only we can rebuild the Episcopal Church. The Haitian people are giving sweat equity to this project, some cases literally clearing rubble by hand.

And now you can help. Over the next few weeks can join with other parishes across our diocese to help one of our own. The Bishop of Haiti and his people have asked for our help to rebuild the spiritual center of the Episcopal Church in Haiti, Holy Trinity Cathedral.

Be a Part of Something Big! Buy "Bricks" for \$10 each! We will be collecting your donations on Pentecost Sunday, May 27th.

From Our Seminarian, Sarah Monroe

April, 2012

Hello everyone,

I had such a wonderful time visiting you all last in February! Thank you all again for all of your support and prayers.

I wanted to update you on my upcoming plans. I am finishing my second year of seminary soon and am looking forward to classes being over for the year. I am also finishing up my internship with Ecclesia. It is going to be so hard to leave this community-- I love everyone there so much! But it is time to say goodbye and I know that they will continue to thrive. I will always hold all the amazing people I have met and worked with there close to my heart.

I will be driving back to the Pacific Northwest with a friend who is moving to Portland. We leave on May 18th, right after graduation ceremonies. I have been in conversation with Bishop Greg and with other mentors and have decided to complete my final year of seminary closer to home. There is an outdoor church starting in Seattle and I have been invited to be a part of it. After a great deal of thought and prayers, I have decided to move back. I am so excited to be going back to the trees and mountains of the northwest and also excited to be a part of this new work. I am also happy to be closer to my new niece and nephew. I still am working out details about where I will live, etc.

I will actually finish at EDS as a distance student, so I will retain all my financial aid. I am really looking forward to being back. I have had an amazing experience in Boston, but it seems time to come back to the other side of the states again. I am looking forward to the opportunities there. Bishop Greg has been wonderfully supportive.

I look forward to seeing you all in just a few months! The weather in Boston has been odd-- unseasonably warm and sunny (it got up to the 80s last week--yikes!). I hear that it is more normal there--plenty of rain! Many blessings to all of you-- you are ever in my thoughts and prayers.

Looking forward to Holy Week and beyond, Sarah

Light Replacement Energy Savings Project

St. Mark's is working on a project with the PUD to upgrade the lights in the parish hall, kitchen, and classroom, plus install some motion sensors for lights in seldom used areas. The estimate for the cost to replace 14 very old and tired fluorescent light fixtures in these areas is about \$1,000, plus up to an additional \$500 for a electrical contractor and a state L&I permit. An application sent to the Diocese for a Green Grant could match the cost up to \$500, and the PUD could also subsidize the project up to

\$500, leaving the potential cost to St. Mark's at only several hundred dollars. The PUD estimates St. Mark's electric bill cost savings with these upgrades to be about \$77 per year. And, the improved lighting will make the spaces lit much more bright. Another potential future project could be improved lighting in the Nave and Narthex. At the April Bishop's Committee meeting it was approved to submit applications to the PUD and the Diocese for this light replacement project. It was also suggested that maybe St. Mark's project could be mentioned in the PUD's newsletter.

Other Articles on Faith and General Religious Information

(Two commentaries from the website Episcopal Café in the past few weeks, written by contributors referencing other web articles they have read recently. Episcopal Café is linked on our own website Home Page, or go directly to: <http://www.episcopalcafe.com/>)

Proposed liturgies honor creation, offer Daily Office alternatives

According to [Episcopal News Service](#), the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music will be offering rites honoring creation and the care of beloved animals as well as prayers to supplement the Daily Office. Also they are requesting continued trial use of Holy Women, Holy Men.

The proposed rites honoring creation include materials for observing Rogation Days, the blessing of the animals on the feast of St. Francis or the nearest October Sunday and prayers for "civic occasions" such as Earth Day or Arbor Day or blessing a community garden. The commission developed the liturgical materials in response to 2009 General Convention resolutions to establish a "Creation Cycle of the Pentecost Season" but ultimately decided not to recommend creating an optional season.

In response to a 2009 resolution about rites for companion animals, the commission developed a Burial Office for a Beloved Animal and other prayers for use at the adoption, illness, loss or death of companion or service animals. The creation and beloved-animal rites are not one-size-fits-all. Not all congregations do the blessing of the animals, for example, and those that do may bless them in a parking lot or process them down the main aisle of the church during a worship service, Phillips noted. "St. John the Divine [Cathedral in New York] brings in the elephants. Every place kind of sets its own style, but this will enable some prayers, some litanies, a kind of form that people can draw on that we hope will create a good standard."

The Daily Prayer for All Seasons is proposed "for experimental use by individuals and in congregations and other church groups wishing to pray or meditate throughout the day," according to the Blue Book resolution. It is intended to complement the Daily Offices and Daily Devotions within the Book of Common Prayer. "Those are really wonderfully rethought for a contemporary audience," Phillips said. The idea is to offer "not a replacement, but an alternative to what's in our prayer book to appeal differently, to fit into people's complicated and post-modern lives." She believes they will be especially useful in places like college campuses or with retreat groups, "but especially for people to carry around in their car, maybe have an application on their mobile phone that they can pray an office ... in 10 minutes."

Other SCLM resolutions propose:

- continuing revision of the Book of Occasional Services;
- authorizing continued use of Enriching our Worship 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5;
- continuing to "collect, review and disseminate materials to address Christian anti-Judaism expressed in and stirred by portions of Christian scriptures and liturgical texts";
- revising prayer book Holy Week liturgies to conform with the Revised Common Lectionary;
- continuing to develop liturgies for the adoption of children;
- adding The Message and the Common English Bible as approved translations for use during worship;
- setting translation standards that include reflecting "the idiomatic style & cultural context" of the languages used;
- providing \$105,000 for SCLM meetings and \$202,000 for developing and reviewing liturgical resources as mandated by General Convention and church canons.

The Commission did not recommend revising The Hymnal 1982 but there is a lively discussion of church music at the [Episcopal Church Musicians Facebook](#) page.

Posted by [Ann Fontaine](#) on April 26, 2012

Thank you for your pledge ... we mean it!

If it's true that we now live in a "Thank You" Economy, hadn't the church, with all its talk about true gratitude as an expression of Christian stewardship, ought to be at the leading edge?

The Rev. Hunt Priest, rector of an Episcopal parish on Mercer Island in the Seattle area (and - okay, a very good friend, but it's a small church, right?), considers some of the outcome of the collision of actual gratitude with genuine, roots-down people skills.

A couple years ago one of our parish leaders told me that the giving record she received from Emmanuel, as well as those she had received from other churches where she had been a member over the years, were blasé and lacked any information about how her offerings were actually being used. "They look exactly like my bank statement," she said, "and consequently they end up on a stack of other papers that will need attention at some point." She noted that other groups she and her family support often include with their mailings an engaging photo and some information about who has benefited from the work of the organization.

So, now, in addition to a generic thank-you sentence on the statement itself, with instructions to contact the bookkeeper if there's an error, we also include a 8 ½ x 11 "newsletter" with a color photo or two of life in our church community or ministry projects we have supported or participated. Under the photos is a paragraph making the connection between our parishioners' offering of time, talent and treasure and the work we are doing together. Not only do these letters go out to parishioners quarterly, but the end-of-year giving records that go to all who have given money also include a similar newsletter, but with a more end-of-year focus.

The end-of-year giving records included a photograph from a parish-wide picnic. One of the real gifts of this congregation is that there are a wide variety of age groups worshiping and working together on projects. The photo was of an older and younger member enjoying each other's company, with a written reminder of this aspect of Emmanuel's common life.

Posted by Torey Lightcap on April 26, 2012 7:55 AM

*(Three commentaries from the website Episcopal News Service in the past few weeks. Episcopal News Service is linked on our own website Home Page, or go directly to:
<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/>)*

When Religion and Spirituality Collide By Diana Butler Bass | April 18, 2012

[Religion News Service] Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the leader of the Church of England and the worldwide Anglican Communion, recently announced that he would step down by year's end. A few days later, the Church of England rejected a Williams-backed unity plan for global Anglicanism, a church fractured by issues of gender and sexual identity. The timing of the resignation and the defeat are probably not coincidental. These events signal Anglicans' institutional failure.

But why should anyone, other than Anglicans and their Episcopal cousins in the U.S., care? The Anglican fight over gay clergy is usually framed as a left and right conflict, part of the larger saga of political division. But this narrative obscures a more significant tension in Western societies: the increasing gap between spirituality and religion, and the failure of traditional religious institutions to learn from the divide.

Until recently, the archbishop of Canterbury was chief pastor for a global church bound by a common liturgy and Anglican religious identity. Expectations for religious leaders were clear: Run the church with courage and vision. Bishops directed the laity, inspiring obedience, sacrifice and heroism; they ordered faith from the top. Today's world, however, is different.

All institutions are being torn apart by tension between two groups: those who want to reassert familiar and tested leadership patterns — including top-down control, uniformity and bureaucracy; and those who want to welcome untested but promising patterns of the emerging era — grass-roots empowerment, diversity and relational networks. It is not a divide between conservatives and liberals; rather, it is a divide between institution and spirit.

Top-down structures are declining. In the Anglicans' case, spiritual and institutional leadership have been severed. The emerging vision maintains that spiritual leadership must be learned, earned and experienced distinct from, and often in tension with, the ascribed role of bishop.

Williams' career is a public illustration of the conflict. Early on, Williams was recognized as a teacher and pastor of deep spirituality, a person who practiced what he preached. He had the sort of character and imagination that the Anglican Communion most needed to move toward a new future.

And that is where the trouble started — and where the story turns tragic. Williams was caught in an impossible situation. As Anglicans around the globe quarreled over the role of gays and lesbians in the church, the archbishop's authority was called into question. Williams struggled to be both a spiritual leader who embraces the emerging vision and the leader of an institution committed to guarding the old order.

The archbishop might be called “spiritual head” of Anglicanism, but he also acts as CEO of the Anglican religious corporation who must manage company policy, ensure profitability, maintain properties, open new markets and negotiate politics. It is a bureaucracy, often more a religion business than a vibrant spiritual community.

For centuries, faith was top-down: Spiritual power flowed from pope to the faithful, archbishop to Anglicans, priest to the pious, pastor to congregation. This has changed as regular people confidently assert that spirituality is a grass-roots adventure of seeking God, a journey of insight and inspiration involving authenticity and purpose that might or might not happen in a church, synagogue or mosque. Spirituality is an expression of bottom-up faith and does not always fit into accepted patterns of theology or practice.

Fearing this change, however, many religious bodies, such as the Anglican Communion, increasingly fixate on order and control, leading them to reassert hierarchical authority and be less responsive to the longings of those they supposedly serve. And that will push religion further into its spiral of irrelevance and decline.

Williams demonstrated how wide the breach has become between spirituality and religion. His tenure proved that religious institutions — as they currently exist — fail when they refuse to engage the new pattern of faith.

The gap between spirit and institution is not only problematic for religious organizations. The gap exists in business, where work and craft have been replaced by venture capital and profitability; in politics, where the common good and democracy are crushed by partisanship and corporate money; in education, where critical thought and the humanities are sacrificed to test scores.

The Anglican crisis is not about Rowan Williams or even religion. It is about the drive for meaningful connection and community and a better, more just, and more peaceful world as institutions of church, state and economy seem increasingly unresponsive to these desires. It is about the gap between a new spirit and institutions that have lost their way. Only leaders who can bridge this gap and transform their institutions will succeed in this emerging cultural economy.

The archbishop will return to teaching — a good choice. In our times, spiritual renewal is taking place among friends, in conversation, with trust and through mutual learning. A new thing is happening on the streets, in coffeehouses, in local faith communities, and in movements of justice and social change. Far from demands of institutional religion, Rowan Williams will find a new kind of faith is being born.

(Diana Butler Bass is the author of eight books, most recently "Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening." A version of this commentary originally appeared in USA Today.)

The Prayer Trees By Lori Erickson | April 12, 2012

[Episcopal News Service] If you walk by my church on a warm spring day, at first glance you might think we’ve been targeted by pranksters: outside our front door, several of the trees bear a rainbow of ribbons, brightly colored strips of cloth that flutter in each passing breeze.

The ribbons aren’t the result of hijinks, for we have actually invited their presence by setting up a small kiosk near the trees that contains a blank notebook and a bag full of fabric ribbons. “Offer your healing prayers here,” says a sign, while inside the kiosk is another note that explains that people around the world have long put ribbons on trees as symbol of their prayers.

When we set up the kiosk we weren’t sure how this addition to our church lawn would be received. Located as we are in the middle of a busy university town, we worried that it might be a target for vandalism or that no one would take advantage of its invitation to pray. Nearly a year later, our trees are adorned with hundreds of ribbons, bearing colorful testimony to those who have stopped for a few moments in front of our church to offer prayers.

Many people have also left petitions in the blank book, prayers that are given voice each Tuesday morning during our weekly healing service. “I pray that I may be strong enough to do what must be done,” says one. “I pray that the Holy Spirit will allow my grandmother to forgive those who have hurt her,” says another. “We pray that our downstairs neighbor will be OK,” offers another.

The brief prayers make me wonder about the lives behind them. What has happened to the grandmother who can’t forgive? Why does that downstairs neighbor need prayers? I’ll never know, but that mystery is part of the beauty of the ribbons.

I also appreciate how the prayer trees are a form of quiet outreach and support to those who walk by our door. “I tied a ribbon on one of your trees for my sister who has cancer,” a friend told me the other day, someone whom I know does not have a faith community. “It makes me feel better to see it as I walk by each day.”

One of my favorite prayers left at the kiosk is this one: "I give a prayer of thanksgiving for this church for providing this awesome opportunity to pray as a community." Given the fact that the person signed this message with an extravagantly large heart, she was probably young enough to consider "awesome" as a synonym for "great." I like to think our prayer trees are awesome in the original meaning of the word as well.

As Episcopalians we rightly value the historic liturgies of our church, crafting our services with beautiful words and music. I greatly appreciate those efforts, but I often find myself pausing outside our church on Sunday mornings to look at the ribbons dancing in the breeze. I think that perhaps as beautiful as the service has been, it is these prayers that go most swiftly to God's ear, for in matters of the heart, simplicity is better than complexity.

I'm reminded too of a line from Lauren Winner's powerful new memoir, "Still: Notes on a Mid-Faith Crisis." As Winner struggles with trying to keep her spiritual life alive through a time of doubt and trial, she takes comfort from a poem written by Carrie Fountain. Prayer, the poet writes, "was the last skill I learned. I practiced rigorously. Just as I was getting good, I lost it. As soon as it was gone, I understood it was not a skill at all."

That's why I think those ribbons have something to teach us about how to pray. Our words don't have to be elaborate or skillfully crafted. They don't have to be spoken inside a church or led by a member of the clergy. However they're formed, the spirit will take the words where they need to go, borne on the wings of each passing spring breeze.

(Lori Erickson writes about inner and outer journeys at www.spiritualtravels.info. She serves as a deacon at Trinity Episcopal Church in Iowa City, Iowa.)

Meeting Jesus on the Emmaus Road & the Ocean Floor By Danielle Tumminio | April 23, 2012 [Episcopal News Service] There's a lot to worry about as a scuba diver: decompression sickness, burst lungs, limited air supplies, and inhospitable sea creatures. But none of this compares to the question most feared by a scuba diver: "Why did your buddy vanish?"

Staying with your buddy is the cardinal rule of diving: The buddy is a lifeline with extra air, an extra pair of eyes to spot danger, an extra body for protection. You place your trust, your safety, even your life, in that person.

Which explains why I panicked when—six years ago and 60 feet underwater—my scuba partner disappeared. He was staring at a particularly colorful anemone, but after I turned away for a second to grab for my oxygen gauge, he was gone.

I looked up. A school of fish passed, but not my buddy.
I looked to the right and saw a boulder.
I looked behind me, and there was nothing but dark blue water.
I thought he was gone, and I thought, in that moment, that I would never get over the loss.

But a few seconds later, just as I was about to return to the surface in hopes that he'd done the same, my buddy swam out from behind the large boulder, signaling that he'd lost his balance in a strong current, and landed on the ocean floor behind it. I couldn't see him for the enormity of the stone, but he'd been there all along. As he grabbed my hand, my heart rate slowed, and we continued our journey together.

Although on a different scale, I imagine the disciples experienced those kinds of roller-coaster emotions around the time of Jesus' death. They'd spent weeks traveling beside their teacher, their Savior, watching him heal the sick and preach the Gospel. And then in a matter of days, they saw him degraded, tortured, dead.

There was also, of course, the strange matter of his body's disappearance.

In their shock and grief, one group of disciples walked along the Emmaus Road, telling this spiritual odyssey to a stranger. Then, in the sharing of a meal, something happened: Their eyes saw this stranger differently and they realized it was Jesus, and he'd been with them all along.

Just as fear and sadness blinded me from seeing my buddy, so the disciples were blinded from seeing theirs. (Gives a new meaning to the Buddy Christ, doesn't it?) But the disciples have one thing on me: they saw the resurrection miracle—they got to witness the real thing.

None of us are as lucky as those two disciples, who walked beside Jesus on the Emmaus Road and shared a meal with him. Without concrete evidence, it becomes easy for us to wonder if Jesus' resurrection was just the elaborate prank of all time.

Maybe Peter convinced the other disciples to steal the body...
Maybe the women who discovered the empty tomb only said they saw an angel...
Maybe Jesus pretended to die on the cross...

When questions like these arise, it's almost as if doubt becomes the huge underwater boulder that keeps us from seeing our buddy, and our faith isn't strong enough to move it. I think God realized that this might happen, that belief without tangible proof is too much to ask of us, just as God knew the same about the disciples on the Emmaus Road.

I think God also knew that we like to eat. Which perhaps is why the disciples' eyes were only opened to Jesus' true identity in the bread and wine. And that, I think, is where their story overlaps with ours.

You see, biblical scholars believe that the disciples on the Emmaus Road weren't the ones at the Last Supper. They hadn't seen Jesus break bread before. Which means that these disciples weren't remembering something they'd already seen; they were experiencing a new thing. Jesus gives us that same opportunity: In sharing that Holy Communion together, we meet the risen Christ. We are given evidence.

But we are also asked to believe that Christ will always be beside us, even when communion is complete, when only crumbs remain on the table and the wine goblet is empty. Having experienced communion, our faith becomes a little stronger. Knowing we can come back, reach out our hands and taste the bread and wine again, faith becomes stronger still, making it easier to believe that God is always there, even when evidence is not.

As we walk down the long Emmaus Road of our lives, Christ travels beside us on the straight-ways and on the windy switchbacks, on land and in the ocean depths. For that, I rejoice, because it means that even as we descend to the ocean's depths and rise to its surface, we will always have a companion beside us.

(The Rev. Danielle Tumminio lectures at Yale University and is the author of God and Harry Potter at Yale. She currently serves as an interim associate at St. Anne in-the-Fields Episcopal Church in Lincoln, Massachusetts)

(Two perspectives on faith issues from other Episcopal priests in our Diocese.)

Worship is Not About You By The Rev. Cynthia Espeseth St. Hilda St. Patrick, Meadowdale, WA |
Apr 25, 2012

"The devil likes it when you skip church because he knows that dry people burn better."

Perhaps it's not theologically or even politically correct to say such things now, but I'm reminded of that proverb as I have observed church attendance dwindle. Not only in my own church, but in other Christian churches across all denominations.

Over the last 10 years, there has been a slow decrease in membership and participation. Maybe this is happening in your place of worship – if you attend a place of worship. According to the Pew Research Center, "Americans ages 18 to 29 are considerably less religious than older Americans. Fewer young adults belong to any particular faith than older people do today. They also are less likely to be affiliated than their parents' and grandparents' generations were when they were young."
(www.pewresearch.org, "Religion among the Millennials.")

As a priest in the Episcopal church, I've been watching this trend for some time. My own children, who are in their 20s, don't attend church. It isn't just the Millennials – people are finding more reasons to not get up on Sunday morning to come to pray and worship with their neighbors. We are a consumer culture, and it infects how we respond to everything, including our faith. A colleague recently told me about a family that left his church because they didn't like the service times. That may be a truly good reason. But it also sounds like people who didn't like what they were getting for their money, so they traded in for something different.

Our faith and the whole reason we even go to church has little to do with our wants and expectations. Does that sound scandalous to you? It does to me, but then so does the whole Gospel story of Jesus Christ.

God became human in Jesus, dwelt among us, was murdered because of human fears, and then was resurrected. That last bit seems the hardest to grasp. But Jesus didn't stay dead. Divine love and forgiveness redeemed fear and hate.

The message of Jesus, the cross and the empty tomb is really about the power of God who always redeems our lives. It isn't about how we feel or think. God has already provided salvation for each and every person who ever lived, past and future.

Divine love and forgiveness is freely given to all – no exceptions. And it doesn't matter if you believe it – because the truth of the event has already happened. But it does matter that we respond to such amazing grace. As the old hymn says "Love so amazing so divine, demands my life, my all."

It is presumptuous for us to think that our faith depends upon our feelings. It is presumptuous of us to decide whether to attend church based on how we are feeling on any particular day.

Our prayer and worship is not about us. It is about God, and what God is doing in our lives, and the way we know that is through our relationships with each other. We show up in church because we need each other. And to give thanks and praise to the One who made us, whose image and likeness we have at the core of our being.

Trinity Episcopal Church, Everett, Washington Pastor Rachel Taber-Hamilton

--I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

In my February Chimes article, I shared with you that my sister-in-law, Danusia was waiting to hear news about a potential diagnosis of a rare form of cancer; she would either be consigned to a devastating challenge or be told she was cancer free. When her test results were returned later that month she was told that there was no evidence of disease. As you can imagine, she was ecstatic. Her whole demeanor changed from one of fear to one of joy; she returned to her usual routines of regular exercise, trail biking, group involvements and meetings with friends.

The day before she and my brother were due to fly up to visit my husband and me, Danusia developed acute abdominal pain and went to the emergency room for follow up. The test results indicated a large malignant mass. The nature of her particular cancer is aggressive and prone to actually feeding off of certain kinds of chemotherapy. Nonetheless, her oncologists have advised a course of chemotherapy in preparation of surgery to remove the mass. They had to cancel their travel plans to visit us, in order to begin the treatment immediately.

During our phone conversations, she is truthful about feeling utterly terrified and overwhelmed by sudden onslaughts of terror at night when the burdens feel especially stark and horribly real. My brother, Don, is very articulate and compassionate about his feelings for her and his dedication to supporting her in every possible way throughout their journey to come. Neither of them denies or hides their feelings, fears or sense of powerlessness. They are like two souls clinging to one another as survivors of a shipwreck, holding on to one another amidst the wreckage of what once was and utterly uncertain of what will be. The only thing that keeps them afloat is their love for one another. Powerful stuff - Love.

Danusia's suffering is complicated by a theology she was taught many years ago that informs her that her cancer diagnosis is either: a) divine punishment from God or b) a test of her faithfulness to God. I do not doubt that everything about this journey will feel like a test of all that she has ever believed, thought or placed her faith in (including modern medicine). However, I do not believe for an instant that God requires her spiritual fidelity as a condition for his love. Also, the idea that God punishes people through inflicting disease, misfortune or disaster is the type of thinking that Job himself challenged in his supposed "friends." Unfortunately, it seems that no matter how many times Jesus himself reiterated that God loves the diseased, the infirm, the unclean and the sinner, people can still come up with the regrettable (and truly stupid) idea that God is punishing them.

(Yes, I said "stupid.") I love my sister-in-law, but I could throttle the person who ever told her she was anything less than lovable in any condition she would ever know in life. I spent more time and energy in 18 years as a healthcare chaplain helping people overcome spiritually debilitating and pathological theologies than anything else I ever did. The ultimate impact of this particular (stupid) idea is that Danusia is now experiencing a crisis of faith; (to wit) God's punishment ("giving her cancer") means she is either not loved by God or being cruelly treated by a God she trusted. Consequently, she does not want to have a relationship with him at all during a time when spiritual coping and faith could be a significant benefit and support.

I don't know if Danusia will listen to me, but I hope that all of you will.

God loves you and wants only abundant life for you, in whatever condition or circumstance you currently find yourself living within - you are beloved. God is with you and loves you as his dearest child and great friend. You are so precious; any challenge or illness or hardship you are experiencing is a part (a hard part, I grant you) of the mortal stuff of human life. We break. We grow old. We die. AND we are deeply and profoundly loved so that we might always know that we are not alone on our human and spiritual journey.

We have a God who was broken for us as an ultimate proof of his love. Please do not let him have died in vain, but live into your days (with whatever challenges they bring) in the faith and knowledge of God's abiding love for you.

Powerful stuff - Love.

May 2012 Monthly Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 <u>10am</u> Holy Communion <u>7pm</u> AA	30	May 1 <u>7pm</u> AA	2 <u>10am</u> Bible Study <u>12pm</u> Monte Ministerial Association Meeting	3 <u>12pm</u> AA <u>7pm</u> Gamblers Anon	4 <u>7pm</u> AA	5 <u>10am</u> Special Day at St. Timothy, Chehalis
6 <u>10am</u> Holy Communion <u>7pm</u> AA	7	8 <u>9:30am</u> Worship Team <u>7pm</u> AA	9 <u>10am</u> Bible Study	10 <u>12pm</u> AA <u>7pm</u> Gamblers Anon	11 <u>7pm</u> AA	12
13 <u>10am</u> Holy Communion <u>1:30pm</u> Jail Ministry <u>7pm</u> AA	14	15 <u>7pm</u> AA	16 <u>10am</u> Bible Study <u>6:30pm</u> Bishop Committee	17 <u>12pm</u> AA <u>7pm</u> Gamblers Anon	18 <u>7pm</u> AA	19
20 <u>10am</u> Healing Service <u>7pm</u> AA	21	22 <u>2pm</u> Birthday Party @ Monte Health & Rehab <u>7pm</u> AA	23 <u>10am</u> Bible Study	24 <u>12pm</u> AA <u>7pm</u> Gamblers Anon	25 <u>7pm</u> AA	26
27 <u>10am</u> Pentecost Sunday <u>10am</u> Holy Communion <u>7pm</u> AA	28	29 <u>7pm</u> AA	30 <u>10am</u> Bible Study	31 <u>12pm</u> AA <u>7pm</u> Gamblers Anon	June 1 <u>7pm</u> AA	2

Birthdays:

Jim Stewart—8th
Mary Linth—27th

Colby Madrid—16th

Kyron Dierick—17th

Anniversaries:

Lee & Rev. Joyce Avery—3rd
Charles & Sandy Marr—9th
John & Rev. Dorothy McMeekin—28th

June 2012 Monthly Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 <u>10am</u> Pentecost Sunday <u>10am</u> Holy Communion <u>7pm</u> AA	28	29 <u>7pm</u> AA	30 <u>10am</u> Bible Study	31 <u>12pm</u> AA <u>7pm</u> Gamblers Anon	June 1 <u>7pm</u> AA	2
3 <u>10am</u> Trinity Sunday <u>10am</u> Holy Communion <u>7pm</u> AA	4	5 <u>7pm</u> AA	6 <u>10am</u> Bible Study <u>12pm</u> Monte Ministerial Association Meeting	7 <u>12pm</u> AA <u>7pm</u> Gamblers Anon	8 <u>7pm</u> AA	9
10 <u>10am</u> Holy Communion <u>7pm</u> AA	11	12 <u>9:30am</u> Worship Team <u>7pm</u> AA	13 <u>10am</u> Bible Study	14 <u>12pm</u> AA <u>7pm</u> Gamblers Anon	15 <u>7pm</u> AA	16
17 <u>10am</u> Healing Service <u>7pm</u> AA	18	19 <u>7pm</u> AA	20 <u>10am</u> Bible Study <u>6:30pm</u> Bishop Committee	21 <u>12pm</u> AA <u>7pm</u> Gamblers Anon	22 <u>7pm</u> AA	23
24 <u>10am</u> Holy Communion <u>7pm</u> AA	25	26 <u>2pm</u> Birthday Party @ Monte Health & Rehab <u>7pm</u> AA	27 <u>10am</u> Bible Study	28 <u>12pm</u> AA <u>7pm</u> Gamblers Anon	29 <u>7pm</u> AA	30

Birthdays:

Natalea Brumfield—6th Candy Miller—12th Bryan Dierick—22nd im Miller—24th Mary Venske—29th

Anniversaries:

Jim & Candy Miller—20th