

The Journey Shared

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION OF THE ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNION

Vicar moving to Omaha

ADVENTURES ARE NOT NEW TO ME

#1. My move to NYC. My first career job out of college — as a mechanical artist in what was back then a cut-and-paste retail advertising department, made it possible for me to move out of my parents' house. My favorite memory of my co-worker/roommate was the first time we had the folks over for dinner. With our backs to them as we worked over the stove, Mom said, "Gee, Larry. If you're a vegetarian, how do you stay so chunky?" "Don't kill her; she's my mother."

After a few years, Larry decided to leave our hometown of Rochester NY and move to NYC with his brother. As the Big Apple was an advertising Mecca, and with a long run of summer stock community theater under my belt and dreams of making it on Broadway, I thought, "Why not?" Frustrated by trying to find a job long-distance (this was back in the days of

applying via snail mail), I realized that nothing would materialize without my being there; so I booked a place on a church-acquaintance's sofa for \$200/month and packed up a U-Haul. No job; living on a friend's couch in NYC — an adventure to say the least. (Another Rosemary story: during her first visit, she scrubbed the bathtub. It wasn't even my apartment!)

I was only able to embrace the unknown of it all having "randomly" opened the Bible to Jeremiah 29:11, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for woe, to give you a future and a hope."

#2. The Friars and their wake. "And now for something completely different," was the title of the announcement of my leaving advertising for the vowed religious life. While in NYC, I had been active in the Charismatic healing ministry of a Christian performing arts company (talk about combining skill sets!) and I had found it so life-giving that I

thought I'd try it full-time. This leaving-all-behind adventure with the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement was truly formative, but not long-lived. On to the next adventure.

Homeless, again, as Blanche DuBois would say, "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." Well, not strangers... a gay couple from church took me in as their houseboy for a few months, until I moved back in with Mom and Dad. That, too, was a part of God's plan, as Mom needed help caregiving for Dad after his strokes. The generosity of my home parish and the local Roman diocese enabled me to finish my M.Div. and continue the ministry adventure, as a chaplain to Dignity-Integrity/Rochester for 12 years, and concurrently as a liturgy coordinator and as a chaplain in a nursing home I loved. Sweet and comfortable until...

#3. The Wild West. Marc had had enough of us loud, in-your-face New Yorkers, and wanted to be closer to his Mom in Omaha (but not too close). →

He had a large group of Native American friends in Denver and an internship offer at the University of Colorado, while a former minister colleague of mine who had moved here previously could put us up while we looked for an apartment and I looked for work. (“I have always depended on...”) Knowing that the conservative Archdiocese of Denver wouldn’t be hiring an openly gay lay minister in a committed relationship, gaychurch.org led me to the ECC, and the rest of the adventure is history.

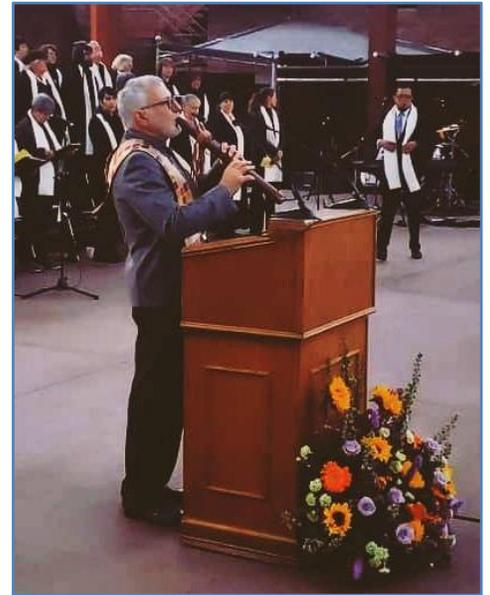
#4. ...until something completely different, again. Now, with Marc’s mother’s health beginning to decline, he feels called to be closer. It means pulling up stakes and venturing into the unknown again, this time in Omaha, but still with the assurance of Jeremiah 29:11.

#5. Vicar adaptations. I’m grateful that Presiding Bishop Francis has approved my continuing to serve as his Vicar to the Rocky Mountain Region, albeit remotely. He agrees that toward summer’s end we should evaluate how it’s going, to make sure his needs and those of the region are being met. It’ll mean using Skype or Zoom to participate in the Regional Council meetings and as I walk with the Bishop Call Team and the Polity Team as we imagine the future of the local church, but I hope to be back in Colorado for special events. As a judicator and board member of the Colorado Council of Churches, I plan to visit at least quarterly. A big drawback is not being able to do in-person advocacy at the Capital, so I’ll need to rely on the members of the region to get more involved in that facet of our mission. I hope to keep abreast of Colorado issues, so my ministry and social media posts remain relevant, though you should expect @FrMichaelECC tweets to address advocacy issues particular to Nebraska as well.



ECC lapel pin at Faithful Tuesdays at the Colorado State Capitol; see Advocacy report, pg. 14

Easter Sunrise Service at Red Rocks



While the conservative Roman dioceses to the north may prove fertile ground for our way of being Catholic, starting a new ECC community would be down the road a bit. My first order of business will be networking in Omaha’s vibrant ecumenical and interfaith community, forging new relationships that will serve to broaden our influence. We may have to rethink the name of *the Rocky Mountain Region*, though, as we lay claim to Nebraska as a mission territory. I’m reminded that Jesus gave both a Sermon on the Mount and one on the Plain, but *Mountains and Plains* is already taken by the region’s Metropolitan Community Churches; if we call our future diocese *The Beatitudes Synod of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion*, remember, it was my idea!

As the adventure unfolds, I ask for your continued prayers as you remain in mine.

blessings, Fr. Michael

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Editor

Fr. Michael Nicosia
nicosia410@yahoo.com

Light of Christ

We've had a busy and exciting spring at Light of Christ! With several opportunities to engage deeper during Lent, as well as service and outreach events, our community has been stepping up and showing up in inspiring ways!



We had another raucous and fun-filled St. Patrick's Day Dinner and Silent Auction, raising money for our combined LOC-Bethlehem Lutheran adult mission trip. With corned beef and cabbage, Irish soda bread, and a live Irish band sing-a-long, the night was a wild success. We are grateful to our nest-community Bethlehem Lutheran for the wonderful effort they put forth in helping us with this event each year. The blessings of St. Patrick were in abundance this night!

In late March, two young adult members of LOC organized our first BYOB (Bring Your Own Bible) event where we read the Gospel of Luke out loud together. In four and a half hours we didn't quite make it through the entire Gospel, but we hear the ending is really good, so we'll all read that at home. Many translations were present from King James to the Inclusive Language Bible, but the thoughtful conversation and questions really made this a memorable event. We projected one version on the screen for everyone to follow along and read from. Look for more BYOB adventures in the future.

In early April, Light of Christ hosted its first "Reconnection Night," inviting members who we haven't seen in a while to join us for Mass and a potluck chili dinner. About 15 of our members chipped in to help prepare 65 handwritten invitations to the event. The night was full of life-giving reconnections, story-telling, and fun games. It was a blessing for all to reconnect with each other and with friends we haven't seen in a while.

Several Light of Christ members volunteered to help prepare and serve lunch at the OUR Center when we learned that another group wouldn't be able to make it. On the menu were chili dogs, coleslaw, baked beans, →





apples and cake. The OUR Center's mission statement is "We help people move toward self-sufficiency by unifying community resources." We are proud to partner with such an important social justice advocacy organization!

The LOC Women's Spirituality Group and a few guests enjoyed hearing Annie share the story of her pilgrimage to Italy that was led by ECC Bishop Denise Donato earlier this year. Annie shared photos and stories of where the Holy Spirit led her on the pilgrimage exploring the role of women in the early church.



Each Monday during Lent, several members of our Adult Faith Formation team led a series on the prophets. As a group, the prophets are clear and strong in their preaching. They are truth tellers, resilient, courageous, and risk takers. They remind us of our shortcomings but always leave us with hope and comfort. What is their challenge for us today? Where are the prophets in our midst? Each session included prayer, Scripture reading, discussion, and reflection. At the end of each night, participants wrote a word on a paper leaf that they chose to carry with them throughout the week, and then hung the word on a branch of a live pear tree. At the end of the 6 weeks, the tree was covered in inspiring phrases and messages. We included the tree in our Easter Vigil celebration, and we will have a tree-planting ceremony after Mass on Mother's Day weekend. It was a great reminder of new life budding in the solemnity and sobriety of Lent, and it connected us with the call of the prophets to be the hands and feet of Christ today.





LOC's Lenten theme was "Noticing Peace." To encourage members to regularly think about this and share their observations, we set up a typewriter in the narthex and invited people to type about how they noticed peace all through Lent. We then took and shared some of what people typed in our social media posts and the bulletin. In addition, in keeping with our long held tradition, we had several combined liturgies with our "nest" community, Bethlehem Lutheran, including a beautiful foot washing ceremony on Holy Thursday.

Church of the Beloved



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

All of our Holy Week liturgies were alive and plumbed the depth of Mystery of our faith. The beauty and richness of the Easter Vigil liturgy has always been a high point for us. This year the vigil was enriched by the presence of three adults and their sponsors in the sacred sacramental journey of faith development: the



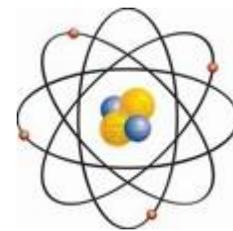
baptism of April and the rite of enrollment of April, Ken and Michael as candidates for Confirmation. The joyous tone and energy of the liturgy filled us with Light. Alice, confirmation leader and sponsor, reflects: "Travelling the path with this group and our Beloved Community on the journey through Holy Week, and Easter, has renewed my deep passion and love for Jesus and the Church. Their curiosity, their desire to know more and deepen their faith and to step forth and serve in love has deepened my own faith journey and has helped spark the new fire of Easter light and joy for our whole community. I look forward to the next sacred steps we take together on the journey toward Confirmation this fall."

Easter morning dawned sunny and warm as we enthusiastically sang "Alleluia, Love is Alive!" celebrating a Mass for All Ages with our children and youth engaged in liturgical ministry. Our youth group prepared and coordinated an Easter Egg Hunt immediately following Mass which was lively. Plastic eggs were filled with non-candy treats. Mother Kae sports one of the surprises, mirroring the joy of those gathered in praise and thanksgiving.



THE EVOLUTION OF OUR LEADERSHIP MODEL

We are embarking on an evolution of our leadership model. In contrast to sister communities whose birth story includes a substantial group of passionate and experienced lay ministers, our community developed as a "church-start" in 2004 with 3 willing ministers, no members (and lots of support and encouragement from Church of the Holy Family). Year upon year, we have grown to a thriving membership and it is time to make a shift.



To augment our current five to seven member parish council, we will periodically engage a broader group of ministry representatives. We want to recognize and energize our wide variety of currently existing ministry teams and introduce some new teams. A dynamic web of leadership interaction will be created through inviting a representative from each ministry team to gather together with parish council four times per year. There are several reasons prompting this innovation:

First, it is wise to intentionally shift from a pastor-centered form of leadership to a broader base of leadership. In the early years, it was natural for the pastor to be central to much development. Now we have →

plenty of depth with energetic and committed members to move forward collaboratively together.

We will be much more creative and coordinated, a synergy will develop, with one idea building on another, so much “more” together, while enhancing communication.

Our long-range plan will include succession planning. Some of us are aging 😊 and we need to build a strong network that includes and mentors younger members. We need to pass on our institutional knowledge and experience, tell our stories, and articulate our firmly-held values.

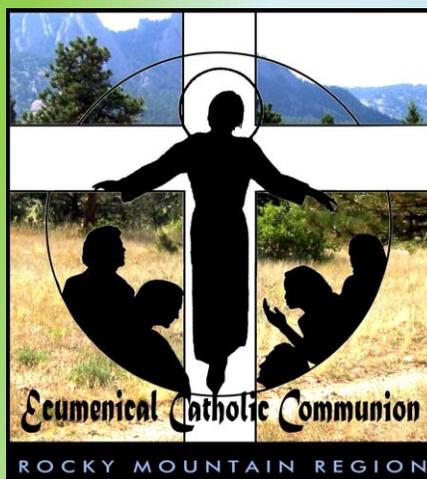
We need to CELEBRATE more and have more fun.

Our current council addresses our administration, legal and financial responsibilities but is not up to date with all the activities of ministries. With the implementation of the ministry-centered leadership model, our council will be operating from a fuller understanding of all that is going on and the dynamics within our community.

The pastor will be more available for member support, pastoral care, liturgy, preaching and spiritual education/direction and less involved in the details of the nitty gritty and administration.

Please pray for us as we pray for you. Each of the communities in our region faces leadership challenges. Change is messy... and dynamic. All organizations experience growth and transitions – constant evolutions as seasons change. We are cycling into springtime of renewal. We gratefully entrust our process to the care and guidance of the Source of our Being, Alleluia!

~Mother Kae



REGIONAL COUNCIL
www.coloradoecc.org

REGIONAL VICAR
Fr. Michael Nicosia, 720-218-1081
nicosia410@yahoo.com
Follow on Instagram and Twitter
[@FrMichaelECC](https://www.instagram.com/FrMichaelECC)

AUXILIARY BISHOP
The Rt. Rev. Denise Donato
revdenised@gmail.com

PRESIDING BISHOP
The Very Rev. Francis Krebs
bishop.francis@ecumenical-catholic-communion.org



For more about the
**ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC
COMMUNION**, visit
<http://ecumenical-catholic-communion.org>



CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY
www.churchofhollyfamily.org
Mthr. Cynthia Drew, Pastor
Mass: 5pm Saturdays
1092 S. Nome Street
(office - 12250 E. Iliff Ave, Ste 120)
Aurora, CO 80013
(303) 369-9000
admin@hollyfamilyco.org



CHURCH OF THE BELOVED
www.churchofthebeloved-ecc.org
Mthr. Kae Madden, Pastor
Mass: 5:00 pm Saturdays
10500 Grant Drive
Northglenn CO 80233
303-489-7046
Mother Kae, 720-232-1562
pastor@churchofthebeloved-ecc.org
Fr. Paul Burson, 720-254-2083



**LIGHT OF CHRIST
ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC
COMMUNITY**
www.lightofchristecc.org
Fr. Teri Harroun, Pastor
Masses: 5:00 pm Saturdays.
9:00 am Wednesdays
1000 W. 15th Avenue
Longmont CO 80501
303-772-3785
churchoffice@lightofchristecc.org

Mary of Magdala

MoM's Social Justice Committee coordinated a Lenten alms project to support the Servant Border Corps in Texas. Over \$2000 was raised for this project which supports those people who help people seeking asylum in the United States.

PALM SUNDAY



HOLY THURSDAY

MoM's Holy Thursday liturgy is done sitting down in remembrance of the Last supper. We take our cue from Jesus and the disciples and celebrate our time together as a family at table. The Foot Washing is a sacred part of the service.



S. Macrina Wiederkehr's poem is a favorite reading for this night:

"GOD IN AN APRON"

Supper was special that night
There was both a heaviness and a
holiness hanging in the air
We couldn't explain the mood
It was sacred, yet sorrowful.
Gathered around that table
eating that solemn, holy meal
seemed to us the most important
meal we had ever sat down to eat.

We were dwelling
in the heart of *mystery*
Though dark the night
Hope felt right
as if something evil
was about to be conquered.

And then suddenly
the One we loved startled us all
He got up from the table
and put on an apron.
Can you imagine how we felt?

God in an apron!

Tenderness encircled us
as He bowed before us.
He knelt and said,
"I choose to wash your feet
because I love you."

God in an apron, kneeling
I couldn't believe my eyes.

I was embarrassed
until his eyes met mine
I sensed my value then.
He touched my feet
He held them
in his strong, brown hands
He washed them
I can still feel the water
I can still feel the touch of his hands
I can still see the look in his eyes.

Then he handed me the towel and
said,
"As I have done
so you must do."
Learn to bow
Learn to kneel.

Let your tenderness encircle
everyone you meet
Wash their feet
not because *you have to*,
because *you want to*.
It seems I've stood two thousand years
holding the towel in my hands,
"As I have done so you must do,"
keeps echoing in my heart.

There are so many feet to wash,"
I keep saying.
"No," I hear God's voice
resounding through the years
"There are only my feet
what you do for them
you do for me."

Words inspired by God



EASTER VIGIL

MoM's Easter Vigil starts outside with the lighting of a new fire and the paschal candle. We then process into the sanctuary, light candles, sing the Exultet, bless the water, and prepare the table. All the special touches for this liturgy make it memorable for all who attend.



Summer Newsletter Deadline August 1st

Send your submissions to Fr. Michael at nicosia410@yahoo.com



Mary of Magdala's Annual Meeting and election for Leadership Council members was held Sunday April 28th. A warm MoM welcome to new members Jeff Akkerman, Chantal Bouveron, and Joanne Gallagher who were elected to two year terms. David Devlin, Rain Orsi, Len Russ, and Michael Six will continue serving the second year of their terms.



MARY OF MAGDALA COMMUNITY

www.marymagdalafc.org

Fr. Jim DeMuth, Pastoral Director

Mass: 5:00 pm Sundays

301 E Stuart Street

Fort Collins, CO 80525

970-493-9536

Fr. Jim 970-420-6230

Dcn. Rosean Amaral 970-692-4238

marymagdalafc@gmail.com



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN AND CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey, Co-pastor

Fr. Don Sutton, Co-pastor

donaldsutton@gmail.com

Catholic Mass: 5:00 pm Saturdays

Lutheran Service: 10:30 am Sundays

1600 Grant St, Denver, CO 80203

303-839-1432

<http://saintpauldenver.com>

Also check out our friends of

BOULDER COMMUNITY IN DISCERNMENT

Mass: 1:30 pm

every first and third Sunday

Community United Church of Christ

2650 Table Mesa Drive

Boulder CO 80305

Mthr. Sheila Dierks 303-449-4302

sheiladierks1@gmail.com

HOLY WEEK CELEBRATIONS



St. Paul Lutheran & Catholic

ANNUAL SEDER

There had been much discussion in the Twitter Universe about whether or not church celebrations of the Jewish Seder should be considered cultural appropriation. Certainly tweaking the traditional memorial of the Hebrew's liberation from bondage so as to include references to Christ's Last Supper and Passion can distort the celebration, but gathering as a community to follow the traditional Haggadah without amendment, can honor our Abrahamic roots. It is part of our tradition, too, celebrating the God who saves and who reminds us of our obligations to care for one another.



Easter Sunday was beautiful in terms of weather, the worship environment and especially in the Worship experience! We welcomed 2 new members by affirmation of baptism and there was time to enjoy a tasty brunch while socializing. We had a number of new faces and a large crowd in attendance!





into our future

AS THE HOLY CONVERSATION CONTINUES

Interested members of all the ECC churches of the Rocky Mountain Region – Holy Family, Church of the Beloved, St. Paul, Light of Christ, and Mary of Magdala – gathered on March 30th to start the active work of calling a local Bishop and envisioning the shape of our future together.

Fr. Michael opened the session with a reading from the book of Our Exodus Ended (based on Ex 3:1-8):

Now the Council was doing its best at tending the flock amid the mountain wilderness, “God’s country” some would say. There the angel of the Lord appeared to them in flames of fire from within a bush ablaze yet not consumed. So they reflected, “This local church has been through its share of flames. How is it that it remains?”

When God saw that they had paused to reflect on this wonder, She called to them from within the bush, “My Servants! My Servants!” And the Council said, “Here we are.” “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off

your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Then She said, “I am the God of your parents, the God of Abraham and Sarah, of Mary Magdalene, Paul and the other Apostles, of John XXIII, of Peter and Mirella and Francis and Art.” At this, the Council stared intently, for they had grown accustomed to seeing God in each other’s faces.

The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the needs of my people in the Rocky Mountain Region. I heard them crying out because of their former slave drivers, and hear them now as they celebrate their lives of freedom and interdependence. So I have come down to lead them from the ways of being church in the past and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

And the Council sang their song of trust: holy One, sweet Guide / reveal Your will; our new “yes” / together. Amen.

Each community brought soil from their respective sites, holy ground gathered together in this holy time as a

symbol of our collaborative, prayerful, Spirit-led process. The Regional Council and our respective communities have been preparing the earth to support a foundation... that the local church be built, not on shifting sands, but on sure footing (Mt 7:24-27). Sure, indeed, for our lived faith and lively conversations are that holy grounding.

Participants mixed the earth together, that it might be brought back to their communities as a symbol of our unity. *May the favor of the Lord our God be ours. Prosper the work of our hands! Prosper the work of our hands! (Ps 90:17)*

All present had the opportunity to sign a Letter to the ECC Leadership Council, formally asking them to recognize an Episcopal Vacancy in the Region. (They have subsequently affirmed our need.)

Those gathered were invited to join one of two planning teams: The Bishop Call Team and the Polity Framework Team. Through the abundance of the Spirit’s call, the make-up of the teams represents the diversity of the region, with lay and →

clergy, men and women, and from the five communities.

Fr. Michael closed with a reading from the book of Ezra (3:11-12) and a closing prayer:

“And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy.”

They feared that the rebuild would not be as glorious as the former Temple; our fear may be that our building may be too much like the former (with its systemic flaws and institutionalized oppressions).

But take heart: Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (2:19-22) affirms that we are “members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”

And the People sang their song of trust: holy One, sweet Guide / reveal Your will; our new “yes” / together. Amen.

AND SO THE WORK BEGINS

The Bishop Call Team has been busy, meeting every other week to start, charged with the task of developing a job description for our future bishop. They will also work out the logistics of accepting applications and fielding nominations, and establishing interview and voting protocols. They’ll be assisted by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Episcopal Council in vetting the candidates who will be presented to our entire regional membership for a vote (hopefully by this Fall). Our bishop-elect will then be

presented to Holy Synod 2020 for affirmation.

The Polity Team is charged with crafting the structure of a future diocese — how we are the local church together. They have begun by reviewing the values that have been articulated by our respective communities. The concerns some have voiced will also play an important part in their work, to make sure that we don’t fall into old, hierarchical models of being church or jeopardize the ECC value of

subsidiarity (keeping decision-making on the local level). They will lay the groundwork for a future Diocesan Constitution that will eventually be developed by a local three-legged stool: lay and clergy representatives and our bishop-elect.

Anyone is welcome to join in these discussions at any time. The progress of both teams will be posted on our regional website, so that our membership is informed and able to share their thoughts and feedback.



Celtic Way

Celtic Way gratefully lives out of what is both shown to us and given graciously. There has been a wonder-filled string of synchronistic events, which has led us to some new and out of the ordinary experiences. We have had a three-year relationship with Phil and Nicole Heifferon who introduced us to Adam Sanders. Phil and Adam both run in Denver’s young music scene. They introduced me to John and Linda Maikowski who run a magical warehouse in Denver’s RiNo district called Converge. Converge is home to many artists who need a place (think, home) to work on their craft, network with like-minded souls, and share the journey with John and Linda. Did I mention that John is a former pastor?

So, he and I met. Linda and I got to know one another and before you know it they have given me a place at Converge for free... as often as I want to be there. Then that has evolved into a podcast that Phil, Adam, and I will do in the podcast room at Converge for... yup, free! AND Adam and Phil know how to record and edit and all the other stuff I know absolutely nothing about out of the goodness of their hearts. We are preparing 12 episodes called, Celtic Way at the Crossroads. Our release date is All Saints Day!

We are grateful, very grateful. I hope you’ll take a listen when the time comes...

~Fr. Scott Jenkins



first annual joint Maundy/Holy Thursday together. Many from Holy Family participated in a Lutheran pastor's laying on of hands and individual absolution for the first time, while many from Christ the Savior participated in a Catholic foot-washing and Eucharistic adoration for the first time. Pastor Paul, whose spirit of Christian fellowship and discipleship is such a joy to experience more deeply at each stage of our new journey together, shared how moved he was in his private prayer there that night by the "respect" Holy Family manifested throughout the more relational parts of our joint worship. Next Maundy/Holy Thursday, we'll meet together for a joint Seder dinner — and include a hand-washing station for those who would prefer to work up gradually to foot-washing!

Deacon David Dunn did a marvelous job suitably arraying for the next liturgy two very different worship spaces as we spent from Good Friday noon through Easter Sunday morning back and forth between Christ the Savior's present lovely sanctuary with its beautiful overhead stained glass and its original warmly cozy brick sanctuary (now its fellowship hall).

On Good Friday, thanks to Pastor Paul's grace in allowing our complete redecoration of that sacred space, we set up Holy Family's historic Stations of the Cross — an appreciated inspiration for contemplation that remained in place through our Easter Sunday celebrations. There we held a moving 6pm Stations service just before Christ the Savior's Tenebrae at 7:30pm — where Pastor Paul bore a large cross into the darkened sanctuary and his daughter sang a haunting "Gethsemane." Some from both congregations participated in both deeply-felt services. On Good Friday we accepted generous contributions to send to the Franciscan friars to assist in their traditional mission of maintaining the sacred sites in the Holy Land.

The special beginnings of the Easter Vigil were beautiful, from the outside kindling of the fire through →

On Good Friday, as on Ash Wednesday, Pastor Paul welcomed Holy Family's holding noon services to facilitate participation in these key "bookend" liturgies of the season by those who could come only at lunchtime. He'd always wanted to do that. In Holy Week, we welcomed home Father Stan Manickam, who concelebrated with Mother Cynthia our first Good Friday Service of the Lord's Passion as well as the Great Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday

Spring at Church of the Holy Family

Church of the Holy Family had a busy few months settling into our new spiritual "nest"-home with Christ the Savior Lutheran Church. Holy Week brought a wonderful collaboration as the two congregations shared their

Phil Voelker's magnificent Esultet and our many wonderful lectors' dramatic proclamations of so much of salvation history. We all shared the joy of those moments in the darkened sanctuary holding our lights kindled from the Easter fire also burning brightly in our hearts. What an uplifting experience it was when *all* the lights came up for us there for the first time together in our new sanctuary at Easter, as Rochelle Head enthusiastically rang all the bells and the choir led a magnificent singing of the Gloria! That moment seemed a wonderful surprise to the older two of the three Tancayo children – who until then had seemed most taken with helping light everyone's candles outside.

We so appreciate and thank music director Regina Corby and the whole choir, including our periodic music ministers Katherine Pagoaga and Carl von Loewenfeldt, for the depth and loveliness of their music ministry throughout our spring season — concluding at our full-house Easter Sunday Mass that Reverend Kathleen and Mother Cynthia concelebrated with such joy. In a characteristically Holy Family capstone to any celebration, good food and drink then appeared abundantly, and our extended families shared a wonderful time of fellowship at Easter brunch. We were happy that Jane and Kyle Kucharski brought *all* their three generations of visiting family members to celebrate with us!

At our Easter Sunday Mass, we especially remembered with lilies placed on the altar — and with sadness for their passing and thankfulness for the joys of their lives among us — those who this year had passed beyond the thin veil: our own Pat Garrity, with lily for Linda; Teri Thompson's mother Angela Lamb, with lily for Teri; Joyce Durland's daughter-in-law, Maria Franklyn, with lily for Joyce. There was also a congratulatory lily for Jonathan and Christopher Azteca-Acosta, to



celebrate the adoption of their second daughter Caylee! As Christopher said, they now have their hands full with “two under two,” and hope to introduce Caylee to us soon.

Holy Family's spring kick-off was our inspiring Psalms gathering the first weekend in Lent with Eden Theological Seminary Professor Clint McCann. Christ the Savior graciously made space available for our gathering all day that Saturday, and we held the welcoming session Friday night in a conference room in our new office building. Our excellent speaker Rev. Dr. Clint brought copies of some of his own books on the Psalms to share with us and preached Saturday night at our concluding liturgy. There, in keeping with the Psalmists' yearning that we shall see God's *shalom* come upon the whole earth, we celebrated the Mass focused on justice-seeking for refugees first celebrated at last fall's ECC Synod in Arizona.

Other meaningful spring activities included our diverse participation in *Faithful Tuesdays* throughout the February to April legislative season of prayer/presentations/lobbying each week at the Colorado State Capitol. We

also shared in new weekly mindfulness meditation and Rosary/contemplative prayer gatherings; a book discussion on *Healing Our Image of God*; and celebrations of Celtic Masses that follow the Celtic seasonal cycle. Best of all, we celebrated with two young families the baptisms of their first child, and we're planning two more joyous baptisms for the summer. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

PASTORAL LETTER ON THE STEM SCHOOL SHOOTING

My heart is heavy, reading the latest news reports on the nearby STEM school shooting Tuesday and thinking about how this weekend, as we celebrate Mother's Day, the parents of 18-year-old Kendrick Castillo will be mourning his death instead of cheering him on at his high school graduation. That he, like University of North Carolina-Charlotte's 21-year-old Riley Howell last week, died heroes charging shooters in their classrooms is likely now of small comfort to their families and friends. But, while demonstrating again how no one has greater love than they who give up their lives for →

their friends, Kendrick and Riley helped save the lives of many fellow students.

This past week I participated in a local rabbi and progressive Christian ministers' monthly discussion partly focused on how could we best talk to our congregations about such dreadful events and what people of faith could best do now to help prevent them in an era where our children are no longer safe at their schools and citizens of many faiths are no longer safe when gathered to worship our God. We had no easy answers, but kept circling back to the thought that people of faith must not stay silent but now speak up with more of a unified voice — e.g., in calling, and continuing to call, our federal and state elected representatives to express our views that they must now finally act on whatever common-sense measures *could* now be taken to help prevent such future terrifying experiences for our children and horrific losses of citizens' lives.

Afterwards I read Nicholas Kristof's May 8, 2019 opinion piece in The New York Times, *We Have 2 Dead Young Heroes. It's Time to Stand Up to Guns*. It seems good now to share with you his below common-sense ideas on possible consensus actions we *could* now implement to help prevent future such tragedies -- and for which we people of faith *could* now stand together to begin advocating with like-minded others:

"It's too late to save Kendrick Castillo & Riley Howell, but we can honor them by taking on gun violence. . . We could require universal background checks before all firearms sales. Some 22% of guns are still acquired in the US without them; a person wanting to adopt a rescue dog often undergoes a more thorough check than a person buying an assault rifle. Safe storage of guns--in gun safes or with trigger locks--prevents children & others from accessing them. [As reported yesterday, at least one of the STEM

school shooters stole the handguns used in the shooting from the 18-yr-old student shooter's parents. No one under the age of 21 can legally buy a gun in CO.]

"Voluntary gun buybacks would reduce the pool of firearms. We should also invest in "smart gun" technologies that require a code or fingerprint to fire. We need more "red-flag laws" that make it more difficult for people to obtain guns when they present a threat to themselves or others. And why do we bar people on the terrorism watch list from boarding planes while still allowing them to purchase guns?"

FYI, besides the laws passed (and one awaiting the Governor's signature) on which our social justice committee co-chairs report to you below, CO also passed such a "red-flag" or "extreme risk" law as Kristof describes this legislative session.

Today, when The Washington Post reports that more than 228,000 students have experienced gun violence in their schools since Columbine, the response of the recently-elected congressional representative from Highlands Ranch, Jason Crow, would seem to deserve our prayerful consideration and follow-through as the Spirit may now prompt us to act. As quoted in The Guardian, Representative Crow stated that the gun violence could not continue: "It is not enough to send thoughts and prayers. It is empty. It is weak, and it does an injustice to our children who are on the front lines of this violence."

The lingering traumatizing after-effects on our children and grandchildren of experiencing these front lines is vividly demonstrated by what one of the UNC-Charlotte students described was the aftermath on her of just having tried to stay hidden during the UNC-Charlotte shootings that took Riley's and another classmate's lives:

"Ulani Robinson, 19, a freshman, was still recovering from the three-plus

hours she said she spent cowering in a dark classroom with other students on Tuesday.

"That night, she said, 'we slept only because our bodies made us sleep.'

'I tossed and turned,' she added, "but my mind never rested."

(From *UNC-Charlotte Student Couldn't Run, So He Tackled the Gunman*, The New York Times, May 1, 2019)

FYI I was working in Washington, DC, on September 11, 2001, and well recall the feelings of despair the events of that day generated. The next weekend, when participating in Mass at the small historic St. Mary's Church in Old Town, Alexandria, it was also surreal to learn that 5 parishioners (both active-duty and civilian) had been among those killed at the Pentagon on that fateful Tuesday.

May God help US all now to begin taking effective steps to address the gun violence in our schools that could so easily lead but to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. My door is always open to anyone who wants to discuss anything about this issue or any other. May Christ this Easter season continue bringing to US all some measure of his peace that passeth understanding!

~Mother Cynthia

Editor's comment—Thank you, Mother Cynthia, for your faithfulness to the rabbi/minister group and your witness at the Capitol on Faithful Tuesdays. As anyone who reads my posts knows, I am an active advocate for sensible gun regulations. That said, I would add that bullying must also be addressed in such school tragedies, particularly as an environment of abuse and social ostracism can lead to violent acting out — an inexcusable reaction, but very real in today's world.



Advocacy

Here are summaries of some significant bills that passed in the 2019 Legislative Session, new laws that will help all Coloradans thrive. Thanks to all who came out this year for interfaith Faithful Tuesdays downtown at the CO State Capitol to help show support for these efforts. See you next year when the next legislative session begins!



Education Equity

All day Kindergarten for everyone, History curriculum to include more racial and minority history, \$100 savings accounts to be created for every child born in CO between 2020 and 2040.

Employment Equity

Companies with more than 10 employees will be prohibited from asking about potential criminal history.

Criminal Justice

Removed the need for cash bail for low-level crimes, so eliminating the current practice of people without money having to sit in jail (often losing their jobs) while awaiting trial.

Immigration

Lowered maximum penalties for some misdemeanors from a year to 364 days, because legal immigrants → convicted of crimes resulting in year-plus sentences can be deported.

Defendants will be able to appeal guilty pleas if they were not told that pleading guilty would affect their immigration status.

Gender Equity

Companies found to be paying employees less due to their gender will be forced to compensate them under an equal pay bill awaiting Governor Polis's signature.

Health Care Equity

Capping the amount of money a person with health insurance can be required to pay for insulin at \$100 per 30-day supply.

~CFH Social Justice Committee
Co-chairs Luann Henz
and Lori Wiegand

THE INS & OUTS OF RECOGNIZING, HONORING & INCLUDING EVERYONE

A recent strategic planning process with Holy Family's parish leadership team included an experience that highlighted the challenge of inclusion. During our final workshop, one of my colleagues reared up, alarmed that a particular important idea was being ignored. This person was upset and needed time to advocate for the suggested project. The group discussed the idea and included it in the final plan.

My experience in this congregational planning drew my attention to our region's work to call and work with a bishop. I want to speak to the matter of finding our voices, claiming our own power, and especially honoring the wisdom of everyone in a conversation.

It's a feature of human development that when we aren't recognized and included we are likely to *feel* the injustice. Perhaps it's a vestige of an outmoded but persistent social habit that men are allowed to rise up and women are expected to remain seated. This imbalance and injustice is obvious, but breaking the habit isn't easy.

I can only speak as a man about the necessary inner work men need to recognize and replace old worn out habits with new and more effective ones. In his daily meditation of Thursday, May 9, Fr. Richard Rohr put his finger on exactly where my own lack of awareness has been. He wrote, "The Way of Jesus is an invitation to a Trinitarian way of living, loving, and relating.... We are intrinsically like the Trinity, living in absolute relatedness. To choose to stand outside of this Flow [of Love] is the deepest and most obvious meaning of sin."

My inner work during the last year involved uncovering and letting go of a childhood survival pattern that as an adult has kept me outside the *Flow of Love* for the people I love, including my own extended family and the

congregation I'm called to serve. In the fall of 2017, while Fr. Len Schreiner was at Holy Family as Interim Pastor, as I began to recognize this pattern of separation, I found myself in a profound personal crisis.

It took many months of work with Fr. Len's guidance as my spiritual director for the roots of this crisis to become clear. To avoid my parents' disapproval as a young man, I chose seminary as a safe way of escaping my father's wish that I go to medical school. As an adult, avoiding disapproval by keeping people at a safe distance was a self-defeating end that I finally confronted at Holy Family.

It is stunning and eventually transforming to discover the *method in the madness* of a pattern that saved me as a child but thwarted me as an adult and as a disciple. That I was structuring my life to keep people at a safe distance had been hiding in plain sight for 50 years. With a little distance, this is no surprise; we know that our human condition is to be separated from ourselves, others, and the Ground of Our Being.

Thus, it seems essential in any conversation about consensus building, inclusive participation, and conscientiously honoring each other, to include a second form of inclusiveness. We need to include mindfulness of our inner lives as individuals. The images and patterns we've retained from childhood or absorbed from society can save us or sabotage us. We need time for dialogue between our public selves and our inner lives. St. Ignatius created the daily examen to facilitate just such a private conversation that includes both sides of our skins.

Inclusive conversation with ourselves needs encouragement. Contemplative practices allow our pasts to emerge from our shadow selves. Spiritual directors help us gain perspective and discover the gifts and saving graces that accompany angst. Therapists help

us outgrow practiced patterns of hopelessness and helplessness. Becoming guardians of inclusiveness in our interior lives is probably a key prerequisite to being guardians of inclusion in our relations with one another.

In my experience with Holy Family's new pastor and my co-worker, Mother Cynthia Drew, speaking about my own anxieties around working closely with a woman has led to a level of collegiality and collaboration beyond anything I've ever experienced. Speaking as a man, sharing responsibility for mutuality with women first makes possible a level of candor and non-defensiveness, and then, powerful and exhilarating partnership.

Fr. Rohr's May 9th posting also included this thought. "I would name salvation as simply the readiness, the capacity, and the willingness to stay in relationship. As long as you show up with some degree of vulnerability, the Spirit can keep working. Self-sufficiency makes God experience impossible!"

The process of *uncovering and transforming* the original escape that until recently shaped my adult life has become my way of standing up. The one thing required to stand up in this way, Fr. Len reminds me regularly, is to stay in relationship with the unknown of the essential self that God imagined and named in the beginning.

The practice of consensus decision making itself can be the life process that helps communities find their essential selves. Like growing up and deepening our faith, all three are about standing up. All three depend on the personal practice of fearless self-review and intentional evolution. In all three, devotion to deep personal awareness and deliberate transformation in community is the way we embody the life giving Flow of Love that is the Mysterious Soul of the Trinitarian universe.

~Deacon David Dunn