

# The Witness

Volume 26, Issue 4

Welcoming Worshipping Working

April 2022

## Special points of interest:

### Sunday

8:00 AM Service  
10:00 AM Service

### Tuesday

5:00 PM Centering  
Prayer via Zoom

### Wednesday

12:15 PM Service



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## Emerging from Death into Life: From Lent to Easter / From Pandemic to Endemic

By The Rev. Ian M. Delinger, Rector

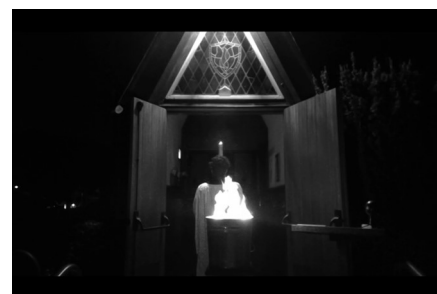
It has been 2 years like none of us have ever experienced. Remember when we hoped that we would be back in our building by Easter 2020?!! As many have said several times, this pandemic time has been very much like 2 years of Lent: self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial. Some of you have no doubt brought yourself through some self-improvement that may not have otherwise happened.

I write this as the new version of the omicron variant of COVID-19 is surging through Europe, Asia, and Australasia. You may be reading this as that BA.2 variant spreads across the US since we have been reliably 2 weeks behind the waves in Europe. I pray not (but I did just peek at the news!).

The will of the American people has spoken, and there is likely no going back to region-wide pandemic-era restrictions. (We will take reasonable precautions at St. Stephen's.) That means we're moving into the endemic phase whether we are ready or not. Looking at it through a theological lens, it's kind of like working our way through Holy Week, the end of Lent as we look toward the Resurrection.

Holy Week is one of chaos, confusion, love, self-giving, suicide and death, ending on the Sabbath, a day on which nothing was done, thinking the next day was the first day without the charismatic leader. Some of you are there already and have been for a while. Some of you are not ready and are waiting to see what comes next. Some of you are still paying careful attention to COVID news and trying to figure out what you are ready for and what you are not. All of those are now equally valid positions, because, as I mentioned, the will of the people has spoken.

In many of the stories of the Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament, chaos is a key part of the teaching, not simply the outcome. The first was at Creation. In ancient Hebrew writings, water was a symbol of chaos (it was a symbol of many things, chaos being one of them). At Creation water covered



The Easter Fire and the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil 2021.

*(continued on page 2)*

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the face of the earth, which was a formless void (Gen 1:1-2). To manage the chaos that the water represented, a dome (sky) was created and then dry land: 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' (Gen 1:6-9). The Flood is another example of water representing chaos. And many stories without water include chaos.

At the time of writing, my life is about as chaotic as it ever has been! I put it on par with the week of 9/11, the day that I was supposed to fly to the UK to start a new life as a seminarian. I'm definitely not of the school of thought that teaches that *"God will not give you more than you can handle"*! Any trained therapist and pastoral caregiver will tell you that it's a dangerous way to offer support to someone in distress. But I do think that, if you have the support and resources, you need and can reflect on what is going on around you, you can understand what you might personally gain as you navigate that chaos. That is the kernel of teaching that is in those Bible stories. As resolution comes...however long that takes...we get the surprise of Resurrection, the surprise that was foretold, but we didn't understand the foretelling, so it was not what we were expecting.

Where we are now in the pandemic might be analogous to the chaos of Holy Week. That Holy Saturday Sabbath moment will come to each of us, I think, and we will be surprised and caught off guard of what happens next that we couldn't have predicted as the resolution to this pandemic. We will be living *actual* Holy Week in person and online. May it focus our attention on the work we have to do to be prepared for Jesus at the Resurrection and beyond.

### Diocese of El Camino Real Spring Renewal: Faithful ways, fresh vistas

Friday evening, April 29 & Saturday, April 30 via Zoom



Spring Renewal is our new annual gathering for the Diocese of El Camino Real!  
 Spring Renewal is for worship, thanksgiving and celebration!  
 Spring Renewal is for shared learning and growth!  
 Spring Renewal is for everyone in our Diocese!

More information and registration: <https://www.realepiscopal.org/calendar-event/spring-renewal/>

### Hands-On Stewardship:

**Thank you** to Lynn Hollister, Bill Crewe, Kay Lewis, Kathleen Pennington and Carolyn Platt for counting the collection and preparing the deposits during March.

**Thank you** to Everyone who worked in our Chocolate Factory or ordered our Chocolate Fudge Easter Eggs for their family and friends, and especially those who ordered eggs to donate to local children served by the Family Care Network and Transitions-Mental Health Association Family Services.

**Thank you** to all who are watching our Facebook Livestreams & YouTube Videos.

**Thank you** to all who have been hosting Coffee Hour.

**Thank you** to the teams cooking up a storm in our kitchen for 40 Prado.

**Thank you** to all who have contributed to this issue.

**Thank you** to all who helped with assembly of The Witness & Eastertide Service Booklets  
 Gail Taylor, Cheryl McCollum, Becky Moseley, Rosey Parks and Nancy Deovlet.

**Thank you** to all who read The Witness every month.



### Let's get together again!

St. Stephen's Church will be hosting a booth at this year's Children's Day in the Plaza on Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

If you are interested in joining the festivities with us in downtown SLO please contact the church office or Becky Moseley (contact info below).

You can help kiddos make crafts, hand out and share info about our church and its mission, help set up and/or take down our booth, or just stop by and enjoy mingling with families in our community again.

We'd love to include you in the fun and hope to see you there!

Becky Moseley: beckymoseley@gmail.com  
805-451-2626

*Celebrating*  
**MONTH OF  
THE CHILD**  
&  
**CHILD ABUSE  
PREVENTION  
MONTH**

**San Luis  
Obispo**

**Children's  
Day in the  
Plaza**

Mission Plaza | Downtown SLO

**SAT | 10AM to 3PM | 2 APR**

JOIN US FOR  
ACTIVITIES, MUSIC,  
PERFORMANCES,  
FOOD, COMMUNITY  
RESOURCES  
& MORE!

Hosted by:  
 Child Care Planning Council  
San Luis Obispo County

### What Can You Do About the Refugee Crises?

SLO4Home is a local organization working to resettle Afghan refugees in SLO. Several organizations and individuals, including at least 11 faith communities, St. Stephen's being one of them, have been working to get the first family resettled in SLO by the end of March. The goal of the organization is to resettle up to 10 families. So far, St. Stephen's has been in the information only camp. However, you can volunteer for a variety of different roles now, both specialized skills and general volunteering. You can also donate. Find both opportunities here [www.slo4home.org](http://www.slo4home.org) When you volunteer or donate, be sure to mention that you are part of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

Episcopal Relief & Development is working on the ground with the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Through their extensive Christian network in Europe. You can read more and donate at [www.er-d.org](http://www.er-d.org) There is a link to the crisis in Ukraine at the very top banner of their webpage.

### Centering Prayer

Where: on your computer or telephone

When: Tuesdays at 5-5:30PM

How: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://tinyurl.com/CenteringPrayer2022>

Meeting ID: 327 152 8720

Password: 0908

Dial by your location:

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose),

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)



The book discussion has concluded but we hope that will not stop you from joining the Centering Prayer group.

## Notes from the Choir Loft

"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under Heaven" has been a favorite verse of mine since first hearing Peter, Paul, and Mary sing it on the radio. The message helps me look at change as an opportunity instead of an imposition. Father Ian and I have been working closely to choose service music for each of our liturgical seasons that reflect the feeling and focus of the church calendar. The Chancel Choir and the Choral Scholars are rehearsing for the end of our Lenten Season Palm Sunday service and the beginning of our Easter Season Easter Sunday Service.

During our Lenten season an additional member has been called to offer talents to the music team of St. Stephen's. I am very happy to inform you that Marti Lindholm will join us as Organist for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday! As our Organ Scholar, Susannah, and her husband, West, navigate their new lives as foster-to-adopt parents, it has become clear that the children they are welcoming into their home need a considerable amount of time and attention. As they adjust to this significant season of change in their lives, with my full support, I am so very grateful that Marti will offer her significant gifts to our Sunday services. Dr. Lindholm brings to the choir loft a lifetime of playing the organ and is a library of resources for the musical journey of our worship. Although she officially retired from St. Peter's-by-the-Sea in Morro Bay in 2019, she will play for St. Stephen's the first two Sundays of each month. Susannah will play our third Sunday, and Ryan will complete our fourth Sunday of the month. I consider this an incredible opportunity for a rich texture of music as each of these musicians bring their talent to our services through the months.

There is a saying, "When God closes a door, a window is opened." Well, I think that all of the doors and windows have just been blasted open! Let the sunshine in! Alleluia!

—Cassandra Tarantino, Director of Music

## Bible Selections for April 2022



**3-Apr-22**  
**5th Lent**

**10-Apr-22**  
**Palm Sunday**

**17-Apr-22**  
**Easter Sunday**

**24-Apr-22**  
**Easter 2C**

<b>1st READING</b>	Isaiah 43:16-21	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Isaiah 65:17-25	Acts 5:27-32
<b>PSALM</b>	Psalms 126	Psalms 31:9-16	Psalms 118:1-2,14-24	Psalms 150
<b>2nd READING</b>	Philippians 3:4b-14	Philippians 2:5-11	Acts 10:34-43	Revelation 1:4-8
<b>GOSPEL</b>	John 12:1-8	Luke 23:1-49	Luke 24:1-12	John 20:19-31

### General Information

**The Witness** is a monthly newsletter published by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, San Luis Obispo, CA to provide information about the parish to the congregation. Subscriptions are free to anyone. Send request along with your name and mailing address to the church office. Donations to help offset distribution costs are appreciated.

**Make checks payable to** St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

**The Church's e-mail address is:** [office@ststephenslo.org](mailto:office@ststephenslo.org)

**Contribution of articles is encouraged.** Please e-mail submissions to [witness@ststephenslo.org](mailto:witness@ststephenslo.org)  
The deadline for emailed submission of articles is the third Friday of the month. Email any questions to [witness@ststephenslo.org](mailto:witness@ststephenslo.org) © Copyright 2022 by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. All rights reserved.

**POSTMASTER:** Please send address corrections to: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church,  
1344 Nipomo Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-3935



## CREATION CARE REFLECTIONS

April 22 marks Earth Day each year and the world usually observes the occasion with rallies, parades, special nature outings, and such things. It's normally a jolly observance. But this year the news — the climate news — is grim. A recently released report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns that the narrow window of time during which we might spare the Earth catastrophic warming is rapidly closing.

We already see the violent weather, bringing loss of life, disruption of agriculture (droughts or floods), and the flight of climate refugees from these conditions. Hotter temperatures are providing ideal conditions for the spread of insects and insect-borne diseases. Extinctions of species have become so widespread and rapid that the author Elizabeth Kolbert has referred to our geological era as the "age of extinctions". The IPCC reports that "Hundreds of local losses of species have been driven by the magnitude of heat extremes, as well as mass mortality events on land and in the ocean and the loss of kelp forests. Some losses are already irreversible."

I recently read a statistic that both encourages and discourages me: while about 78% of Americans know about climate change and are concerned about it, only about 6% are addressing it in a serious way, as though it mattered. Surely part of this is a feeling of helplessness in the face of such a monumental problem. But we don't have the luxury of despairing.

We *know* the things that will help, and it's more than recycling. To cite but one common example, we waste 40% of the food produced in the United States (a big stewardship problem in itself), and much of that waste goes into landfills. There it decomposes, a process that produces large quantities of methane, a green-house gas far more damaging to the climate than carbon dioxide.

Our wastefulness demonstrates our essentially extractive attitude toward the Earth, and that is something we can avoid. And if most of us did, we would make a significant dent in the climate problem.

In the majestic Litany of Penitence in the Ash Wednesday service, we confess to behaviors that are directly connected to our negligence of creation: our "self-indulgent appetites and ways", our "intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts" and our "waste and pollution of your creation and our lack of concern for those who come after us". (BCP 168)

Let's think carefully about what is at issue here: the willful destruction of God's unimaginably beautiful, perfectly balanced natural world and everything that depends on that balance. As Thomas Berry has put it, "We should be clear about what happens when we destroy the living forms of this planet. The first consequence is that we destroy modes of the divine presence".

Ultimately our care of creation is a matter of stewardship. As one prayer puts it,

### SPECIAL EARTH DAY FILM

Join St. Benedict's Earthcare group for the screening of "Youth v Gov", a film about youth lawsuits to force the governments to take real action on climate change.

The viewing is scheduled for Friday, April 22, Earth Day, time to be determined and will be announced in Fr. Ian's Saturday parish email. There is no charge.

*Almighty God, in giving us dominion over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation; Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty. (BCP 827) And let us say, Amen.*

*-Kathryn Bumpass*

## Words of Wisdom

In a few months, I will celebrate ninety years on this earth. I have lived a full and mostly satisfying life. But I want to offer a few words of wisdom, not of my creation, but from one much wiser than I. I believe this is a tested formula for a useful and happier life. Some folks ask me why I have such a positive attitude. I offer these words, and ask "What is the alternative to having a positive attitude?"

**JUST FOR TODAY** I will try to live through this day only, and not try and tackle my whole life problems and issues at once.

**JUST FOR TODAY** I will be happy. I will assume to be true what Abraham Lincoln said: "Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be."

**JUST FOR TODAY** I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something new and useful. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

**JUST FOR TODAY** I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires.

**JUST FOR TODAY** I will exercise my soul in three ways: I will do somebody a good turn, and not get found out. I will do at least two things I don't want to do—just for exercise. And I will not show anyone my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

**JUST FOR TODAY** I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress as well as I am able, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one bit, not find fault with anything. And try not to improve anybody but myself.

**JUST FOR TODAY** I will have a plan, a program for my activities; I may not follow it exactly, but I will have a plan. I will save myself from two pests: Hurry and indecision.

**JUST FOR TODAY** I will have a quiet half hour all by myself. During this half hour, I will talk to God and ask for the strength to try to get a better perspective on my life and what I can do to better serve Him and my friends and neighbors.

**JUST FOR TODAY** I will be unafraid. (Perhaps my Marine Corps training can be the reason here!) Especially I will not be afraid to act to help others, as well as to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to others and to the world, so I receive back to me.

**JUST FOR TODAY** I will recognize God as my Heavenly Father, and that I am His child; and think, act, and feel accordingly.

*-Jim Murphy*

**THANK**  
*You*  
**SO VERY**  
**much**

A personal thank you from the Rector to Liz Frost, Cheryl & Craig McCollum, Leola Dublin-MacMillan, Laura Gaither, Fr Rob Keim, Shannon Larrabee, Kathanne Lynch and any others I have forgotten who gave me tremendous physical and clerical help with my move and in trying to find a new place to live. And thank you to Lee & Lynn Hollister who, just over 6 years ago, negotiated the terms of the house I just vacated, which was the loveliest setting I've ever lived in.

I am grateful that they appealed to my landlord's generosity, which enabled me to take this call to serve the Good People of San Luis Obispo.



## April Celebrations!

### Birthdays

3-Apr	Robert McCorkle
7-Apr	Hugh Platt
12-Apr	George Brown
17-Apr	Judy Tyner
23-Apr	Dottie Hixson
29-Apr	Lawrence Pennington

### Anniversaries

30-Apr	Mark & Stephanie Olsen
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Are we missing your special day? Please reach out to the office and let us know. Call, email, drop a letter in the mailbox. Please no smoke signals.



### Coffee Hour Hosts Needed!

We are looking for hosts for April, May & June.

Please reach out to Liz Frost at either  
lizwfrost@msn.com or by phone at  
805-805-594-0604.

### Run out of checks? Watching the livestream while traveling?

You can make a donation to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church via PayPal. You can scan this QR Code with your phone to be taken directly to the PayPal site or you can go to [paypal.me/ststephensslo](https://paypal.me/ststephensslo)



Scan. Pay. Go.



### Sponsorship of Hunger Awareness Day

St. Stephen's has been a sponsor of Hunger Awareness Day for 3 or 4 years now. Our relationship with SLO Food Bank is one of the strongest we have in the community. Last year we were part of the planning committee, and we staffed a volunteer booth that raised the most of any of their volunteer locations around the County.

Hunger Awareness Day is June 3, 2022, and we want to sponsor at the Hunger Warrior \$2,500 level again this year. Please give generously. Write your check to "St. Stephen's Episcopal Church" with "Food Bank" in the memo.

If we raise more than we need, we will reserve it for sponsorship of the Turkey Trot in November.

### Eastertide Book Study

On the first 4 Mondays in May at 6pm, join the Rector in reviewing the book "Radical Welcome" (2021 Edition) by The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers.

About the book: *This book is at once a theological, inspirational, and practical guide for congregations that want to move beyond diversity and inclusion to present a vision for the church of the future: one where the gifts, voices, and power of marginalized groups bring new life to the mainline church.*

The class will be both in-person in Ramsden Hall and via Zoom at <https://tinyurl.com/StStZoom>  
Password: 0908

