

The Church of the Holy Family

Family Affairs

July/August 2020

Deadline for September *Family Affairs*: August 19

“They railed against God and said, ‘Can God set a table in the wilderness?’”—*Psalm 78:19*

In 1983, Steve Martin starred in *The Man With Two Brains*, an otherwise forgettable movie save for one scene. Martin’s character has fallen in love with the ostensibly kind (but secretly evil) Delores, played by Kathleen Turner. Standing in front of a painting of his beloved dead wife, Becca, Martin asks that she give him some kind of sign if there is any reason why he should not pursue romantic relations with Delores. The dead woman’s voice begins to shriek, “Noooooo!” and the painting begins to spin around. Fireworks go off; wind blows the house to ruin and the wall behind the painting begins to crack, all while the dead Becca screams “Noooooo!” After it all calms down, Martin says, “Really any kind of sign will do. I’ll be one the lookout for it. Meanwhile,” as he takes the painting off the wall, “I’ll just put you in the closet.”

I gave up the whole first paragraph of the front-page article just now because I want you to think about a time when you have asked God for a sign and then been resolutely oblivious when that sign appeared in plain sight. I bet you can think of one, albeit not one quite as amusing as Becca’s picture. I recently found myself giving in to feelings of despair, certain that God was, if not absent, then distant from personal, church, national, and international crises. I even went so far as to ask God for some kind of sign to reassure me of his presence. Just to be clear: the Lord God of Hosts does not take orders from me, something I usually know quite well. I am not usually quite so desperate as to ask God for a sign. But I did.

In the middle of June, I was saying Evening Prayer and the psalm appointed was Psalm 78: “Can God set a table in the wilderness?” the psalmist asked. Here we are parched, devoid of hope. God, can you make a difference? I realized that every request of God for a “sign” is a riff on this very question. The answer is an unqualified yes. The story of God’s relationship with his people is one of tenderness, provision, safe harbor, and deliverance, especially in the wilderness.

My current wilderness is that I miss church so much. I ache for it. I dream about it. My whole life has been spent at church—without it I wouldn’t know what to do or how to carry on.

God’s table, I now know, is all around me, even in this wilderness. God set a table at the ordinations of Joe Sroka and Philip Zoutendam, when the irreducible minimum of us gathered for the ancient rite of the laying on of hands, forever making them deacons in the church. God did so this month as a few of us “Zoomed” in to help a couple celebrate 54 years of marriage, then for another couple’s in-person 45th anniversary celebration. God set another table when I got to spend time with Thomas, living in the Parish House; on many a beautiful afternoon as I sat outside and visited with a parishioner dying of cancer. Again, that table was set when I got to marry a young couple in the smallest wedding I have ever performed. I had to cancel their huge wedding in May, but the couple came back later and said, “We just want to get married. You tell us what has to happen and we will do whatever you say.” So, there we were—all in masks, the guest list pared down from 200 to 10—but the masks could not conceal our smiling faces.

On the same evening I read from Psalm 78, the scripture passage appointed for Evening Prayer was from Matthew 17: “Truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.” As I read these verses—from both Psalm 78 and Matthew 17—I felt a lot like the disheveled Steve Martin standing in his ruined house. Except, instead of putting Becca’s picture in the closet, I am going to keep my eyes open for the signs of God’s table in the wilderness. Peace be with you and God bless you.

Clarke French

Rector, Church of the Holy Family

from the Rector

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Summary of Vestry minutes

AT ITS REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING ON **May 19** THE VESTRY:

- Heard the Rector's report, including that he is spending a great deal of time and effort considering the current situation and that he will follow best medical advice in moving forward. This is also the position of all the major churches in Chapel Hill. One focus is how to reopen safely. Flowers are once again being placed on the altar. Increased pastoral calls continue and parishioners continue to help others. The Rector is grateful for the considerable and sustained contributions to the clergy discretionary funds. Rebecca Ogus and Philip Zoutendam will be ordained in early June.
- Richard Fair, treasurer, noted that the spending year-to-date has been as budgeted with income slightly above and we are in a sound financial position. The receipt of the \$112,000.00 loan under the Cares Act PPP positions Holy Family well to face the financial challenges of the future. Two financial challenges we are facing: retirees will not be required to take a mandatory IRA distribution, and Holy Family receives considerable income from newcomers which will slow during current conditions.
- Committee to Reopen the Church (CRC): Deedee Nachman reported that the CRC has met twice. The main three areas of focus have been preparing the June 15 report required by the Bishop, how to arrange 30 person events, and how we can maintain connections formed between parishioners. A sense of parishioners' preferences is needed so a survey is being prepared. Small groups have been meeting and a full group meeting will occur next week. Deedee Nachman presented to the Vestry the charge that had been given to the group. She also said the group needed to consider changes that would be desirable for the future beyond the current situation. Diane Robertson moved that the charge given to the CRC be approved by the Vestry. Karen Cornett seconded this motion. Before a vote, further discussion was held including the following questions and comments:
 - Whether there is a prescribed cleaning procedure. The response was that the cleaning would be of a high standard including chemicals, probably involving an outside cleaning service.
 - What new technology would be required, especially if streaming from the Nave to the Parish Hall and Commons areas was desired. Some new technology would need to be purchased to accomplish this. In general, the current audio system is pretty good, but the video system needs work. The current music requirements are difficult, since music is usually great at Holy Family. Pre-recorded music will be considered until live singing is allowed again.Lisa Worster raised a concern about how to make people coming to church feel included, given the proposed restrictions. Sabrina Powell recommended considering rerunning the June survey again later in the year.
- Christian Formation for adults will continue with Wednesday webinars.
Christian Formation for children will continue to meet through the summer. EYC will also continue to meet. VBS will be held in a different format. Take home kits will be provided for all ages so parents can also participate.
- Christianity and the Arts is working on small group gatherings.
- Properties Commission is working to add a collection box to the Narthex.

Wednesday Webinar, July 15, 7:00 p.m. — Worship in a time of pandemic

Among the many other questions that have surfaced during coronatide are questions about why we worship the way we do. What does it mean to celebrate “spiritual communion?” What can we do or not do in our on-line worship, and why? As we plan for a return to in-person worship (with all the necessary modifications,) what are the reasons for what and how we will celebrate the Holy Eucharist? Please join the Rev. Clarke French and the Rev. Sarah Ball-Damberg for a conversation about the fundamentals of worship and how those matter in a time like this. Look for the Zoom link which we will send out in advance.

Wednesday Webinar, August 5, 7:00 p.m. — Race and theology: where we’ve been and where we’re headed next

Last summer, the Rev. Canon Rhonda Lee joined us for a three-part reading series on Race and Theology. We began with James Baldwin’s, *The Fire Next Time*, continued with Jesmyn Ward’s, *The Fire This Time*, and concluded with Ta-Nehesi Coates’, *Between the World and Me*. We have read, talked, prayed, and traveled a great distance together since then, and now it’s time to consider where and what next? Canon Lee will rejoin us for this conversation about race, church, reparations, and much more. We will send out the Zoom link closer to time and hope you will be able to join in!

What’s on your reading list, and a few things on mine

When I was a child our local library had a program whereby you could borrow a box of books every summer. I don’t remember why they did this, but I do remember the absolute joy of hauling home a whole box of books to dive into! I no longer have the entire summer off in which to read, but the habit of a summer reading list has stayed with me. Here are a couple of things on my pile, and let me know if you’ve got any recommendations from yours:

Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation, by Jennifer Harvey — The author argues that “framing and pursuing responses to race through a vision of reconciliation . . . has proven to be a fundamentally flawed approach,” and suggests a different way forward instead. A provocative statement, and I look forward to learning more.

From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century, by William A. Darity, Jr. and A. Kirsten Mullen — Darity and Mullen make a comprehensive case for economic reparations for U.S. descendants of slavery. This work will be part of our conversation with Canon Lee in August.

The Mirror and the Light, by Hilary Mantel — If you’ve read it already, don’t tell me how it ends!

The Way of St. Benedict, by Rowan Williams — This one I’ve actually already read, but I commend it to your attention, especially Part One. Williams does a wonderful job of looking at contemporary issues through the lens of the Rule of St. Benedict. Beautifully written, as always, helpful, and thought-provoking. If you haven’t read the Rule itself, give it a try, too. It’s short and readily available.

Happy reading! — Sarah

Birds of the Air: Lay Leadership Training for Small Groups at Holy Family

As you have probably heard by now, Holy Family is soon to offer small groups for parishioners who would like to connect and grow in Friendship with God and one another during the Coronavirus pandemic (online) and after (in person).

Beginning next month, we are teaming up with the Reverend Robert Fruehwirth, Rector at Saint Matthew's in Hillsborough, to offer training for those who hope to be lay leaders in small group settings. This training will take place on Thursdays (time TBD by participants) over a 10-12 week period and will focus on spiritual practices, leadership, fellowship, and holy listening. Here's the great thing! It's not just about learning to be a leader for others, it's also about your journey with God in community, and this program will be meaningful for you, whether you choose to lead a small group after or not.

Want to join in? Need more information? Let us know by filling out the form at <https://forms.gle/eanycwSo5phJtCcv9> or by using your smart phone to scan the QR code here using your phone's default camera app AND by **joining us online via Zoom (link sent following receipt of your sign up form) on June 30 at 6:00 p.m.** In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact Angela Compton Nelson (anelson@chfnc.net) who can answer them.



Christian Education for Children and Youth

The Rev. Angela Nelson, Minister of Christian Education (anelson@chfnc.net)

God's Good Creation: VBS to Go

Our VBS program will be available online this Summer and we are so excited. Information about where and when to pick up materials will be sent out to the Christian Education listserv the first week of July. Our program introduction will be available at that time and in the second week of July, we will release each day's content the evening prior. We hope you will join us as you are able. Content will remain live for the month of July.

If you are interested in helping assemble pieces of VBS to Go, let me know. We've got small projects and ways to participate including (but not limited to) reading storybooks, recording activity instructions, and website maintenance. We'd love to have your help!

Potter and the Powers: July Book Group

In June, our Episcopal Youth Community read *Just Mercy: A True Story of the Fight for Justice* adapted for young adults. In July, we will focus on reading one of the books in the Harry Potter series and discussing the Powers and Principalities. Last year's discussion on *The Order of the Phoenix* invited students to consider the significance of power, symbol, language, fear of death, and the common good. Our reading of Harry Potter informed how we understood the language of the Powers and Principalities in the writings of Saint Paul. Your young people will not want to miss this interesting and enjoyable way to explore literature, life, and Scripture. We will gather Thursdays from 12:00 noon-1:00 p.m. over Zoom. If you have questions, contact Angela (anelson@chfnc.net).

Fundraiser for Prison Ministry is a Success!

Donations from parishioners toward the purchase of toiletries for the men living at Orange Correctional Center earlier this spring totaled \$800.00! Items bought with these funds plus parishioners' in-kind donations filled up more than two carloads and have been delivered to the Orange/Alamance Prison Ministry in Hillsborough. Thank you!



Swimming for IFC/Project 5000 in August

Save the dates of Saturdays August 1, 8, and 15 for our annual Project 5000 ingathering of groceries to re-stock the shelves of the IFC food pantry that traditionally go bare late summer. We will have a "drive thru" set up in the parking lot as we did in May that will allow you to stay in your car while a masked volunteer takes the groceries out of your trunk. This year we will have the added fun of supporting master swimmer Rolffs Pinkerton as he swims 2,000 laps to raise money for IFC's emergency assistance fund! In addition to the food pantry and daily meals IFC offers the community, they also provide emergency assistance funds for rent, utilities, medicines, etc. This service of IFC is a huge help to local clergy who can refer people to them. You can support Rolffs by donating one cent/lap (or any amount). Stay tuned for more details closer to August.

An Update on Haiti

Père Wildaine told us recently that the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Haiti has given him a new assignment. He had been priest-in-charge of churches and missions near Gros Morne, including Molas, for six years. And now he has been reassigned to the island of La Tortue off the north coast. Reassignments happen every few years (you will remember that we worked with Père Noe before Père Wildaine.) Père Wildaine's plans are not certain yet as there are no accommodations or support for him on the island. He is still very connected to the Gros Morne area and plans to continue working on Rotary and other development projects there. Our new partner priest is the Rev. Jean Jonas Laborde. We have exchanged initial messages and look forward to getting better acquainted. Père Wildaine has generously offered to mentor Père Laborde, introducing him to the people of Molas. Here is some of what Père Laborde wrote: "I have about two years of ordination. Son of the church, grown up in it, I'm ready to work for its development and above all for the freedom of God people. After my ordination like Deacon, I was in Latortue. I have had a very good experience although difficult. I studied communication and public relations (while three years), [I am a] teacher of French and philosophy. I play music specially guitar. I promise you my will to collaborate and contribute for the success of our relationship. Together, I think that we could improve life situation of people. I don't really like to talk about me (laugh), but, I hope that you will understand me. In the future, we will learn to know each other. You can account on me." Please continue to pray for the people of Haiti.



Masks for Molas!

You will soon hear details about a fun fundraiser for our school in Molas, Haiti. An army of talented parishioners is busy making a variety of styles of face masks that can be yours for a donation of \$15.00 each that will go toward the expenses of opening the school back up in the fall. Stay tuned!

How being involved with Justice United makes a difference to our neighbors

Most parishioners have heard about our involvement with Orange County Justice United, but most probably do not realize what a crucial difference our involvement makes to our disadvantaged neighbors (those whom Jesus commands us to love). Here is a glimpse.

The mostly Hispanic residents of a mobile home park a bit south of Southern Village are facing degrading conditions: sewage from unrepaired septic systems is running like black streams; horribly potholed dirt roads with no gravel would challenge four-wheel-drive vehicles; many trees in bad shape threaten to fall on homes (one did fall on the bedroom of a home, a child's room). On top of that, there was a rent increase last January and another \$50 increase is going into effect in August. The residents are finding that a bitter pill to take when the park has not been maintained. Many residents have lost jobs or hours during the pandemic.

How do you change a situation like this? First by helping the residents organize and make their voices ring in the ears of the park's owners. Recently leaders of OCJU (Julia Sendor, raised in our church, is one of them) helped the residents plan and execute a Zoom meeting with the park manager, who represents a Charlotte investment group. Several residents spoke about their experiences and put forward concrete proposals to address their concerns. They did all the talking with the park manager (with the aid of both Spanish and English translators).

Second, the voices of the seemingly "powerless" are amplified by the presence of many others in our churches and synagogues who care about what is happening in our community. Over a hundred of us were present at the meeting *as witnesses*. It was heartbreaking to hear one man describe his kids playing in muddy, filthy roads, sustaining accidents on bikes falling into potholes and coming home smelling like sewage! We did not say a word, but when a crowd of a hundred stands behind you as you tell your story, that gives the story power, in Jesus's name. When we talk about witnessing to our faith, this is in no small way what it means.

What was the outcome? Fortunately, the park manager listened with attention and genuine concern. His company bought the park not long ago and knew they had inherited a poorly maintained property that needed addressing, and the pandemic has been slowing efforts. He did not know the extent of the problems, though, because the residents had not communicated successfully through the channel of bureaucracy (structured in English) that would ensure their cries for help could reach him not on location but far away in another city. (The residents had been speaking directly with an on-site "maintenance guy" who could wield a wrench and speak Spanish but not respond to problems of this magnitude.) The park manager reinforced the protocols for communicating issues, and concrete plans to address them were reached: over the next couple months, the roads will be graded and reinforced and three hundred tons of gravel will be spread; the faulty septic systems will be repaired; the most dangerous trees and limbs will be taken down, and periodic inspection will keep up with the heavily wooded environment.

The manager explained that rental increases are based on current market rates, that this park had lower rent than other parks, and that to do more maintenance the rent needed to be higher. He said the increase would all be going into maintenance. He did, after some pushing, agree to report back to the investment group about the financial hardship the residents are facing with losing jobs and hours and having a second increase so soon *before* the park is brought up to a basic level of safety and decency.

In that hour-and-a-half meeting, a great deal was accomplished. There is more hope with the promise to improve crisis-level problems. OCJU is working with two other mobile home parks experiencing their own hardships. This is ongoing work. In the three years I have been involved with OCJU, I have learned that *change happens with pressure applied consistently over time*. The status quo is a monolith that has to be worn down by the weight of relentless love. We are seeing that all across our country right now.

If you would like to be among Holy Family's outreach through OCJU, in either a small or more substantial way, contact Michael Cornett at jmems@duke.edu. Some of our efforts require a few hands and some many hands of outreach.

—Michael Cornett

My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.

—Mark 11:17

Your prayers are invited for the people of our parish and of all nations,
and for the extension and establishment of the kingdom of God.

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

house of prayer

Intercessory Prayers on behalf of specific individuals or groups can be recorded in the notebook kept on a lectern in the Narthex. Intercessions are offered at Morning and Evening Prayer during the week. To have a prayer included in the parish prayer list, please call the church office: 919-942-3108.

The e-mail listserv is a means of inviting the community to join in praying for particular concerns or thanksgivings. To make a prayer request in this way, contact either the Rev. Clarke French (cfrench@chfnc.net) or the Rev. Sarah Ball-Damberg (sballdamberg@chfnc.net).

Confidential requests for prayer may be made directly to one of the clergy, or by asking members of the Prayer Team at the 10:00 a.m. Sunday service to pray with and for you.

This month, please pray for:

- **The victims** and perpetrators of violence, and the victims of war and natural disasters.
- **Those who lead the nation**, especially Donald Trump, our President, and Roy Cooper, our Governor. Please pray that they may serve justice, and promote equality and peace.
- **Those who risk their lives** in the service of their country, especially members of the armed forces and the diplomatic corps.
- **Our sick, homebound, and recovering**, especially Dave Worster, Dick Forbis, Bill and Mary Harrison, Mary Hunter, Marie Carotenuto, Ed Eastman, George Bloomer, Sara Smith, Steve Dixon, Aileen Womark-Montes, Dese Simpson, Stanley Hauerwas, and Celia Lata.
- **Those who have died.**

• **Those expecting children.**

• **Those in any need or trouble**, especially Billy Ray, James, and Ray in prison; Eddie on Death Row; incarcerated men and staff of Orange Correctional Center and those recently re-entering society from prison.

• **Our bishops**, The Most Rev. Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury; The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop; the Rt. Rev. Samuel Rodman, Bishop of North Carolina; the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, Bishop Suffragan of North Carolina.

• **Our seminaries**, especially the University of the South, Sewanee, and the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies at the Duke Divinity School.

• **Our mission partners**, Gyani Thapa in Nepal (Kirtipur Christian Fellowship), Catherine Piwang in Uganda (ChildReach Africa), and Karen Calani in Guatemala (Food for the Hungry).

• **L'École de Notre Dame** in Molas, Haiti, its students, teachers, and staff, and priest-in-charge Père Jean Jonas Laborde.

• **The Augustine Literacy Project** students, tutors, staff, and board members.

• **Our clergy:** Clarke, Sarah, and Paula.

• **Our seminarians:** Brett and Sara

• **The staff of our parish:** Tom, Gary, Julie, Bill, Angela, and Micah.

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Comings and goings

*The Lord shall watch
over your going out
and your coming in,
from this time forth for
evermore.*

—Psalm 121:8

Calling all Blueberry enthusiasts!

Holy Family parishioner Elaine Walker has graciously invited fellow parishioners to come to her farm, **7303 Old Greensboro Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516**, to pick as many blueberries as you'd like. As payment please make a donation to the Holy Family Haiti Scholarship Drive. The blueberry field is open until 6:00 p.m. each day. Once you arrive at the farm, enter through the large iron gate (it will be unlocked) and pick berries. Just show up - no need to let Elaine know you are coming.