

The Elizabethan



The Newsletter of St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church Burien, Washington

August 2017

From Fr. John:

On the feast of the Transfiguration on August 6th, many Eastern Orthodox churches have an old custom of thanking God for the harvest by bringing their first vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers as an offering. Some monasteries bless their gardens or livestock for the same reason, which is to recognize the renewal of the earth caused by the presence of Christ. They see the harvest as the conversion of planted seeds into their full potential and are rightfully drawn to acknowledge the role of that which creates, sustains and transforms.

St. Benedict admonished those who follow his rule to take on manual labor, which has historically tended to mean farming. And when monastics “reform” Benedictinism, they often emphasize a return to manual labor. Of course, Benedictines throughout the ages have also pursued other types of work: providing for guests, nursing, writing (or at least copying), teaching and pastoral work among them. My own monastery, Mt. Angel in Oregon, raises a few crops and tends some livestock, and there are always monks, postulants, oblates and friends of the monks working on the abbey grounds, although the monks make most of their living with a well-attended seminary. It seems that some kind of farming, even if it is just gardening, is always a part of a Benedictine monastery.

Farming and gardening provide daily exposures to the marvels of God’s creations and every experience of grace is an opportunity to become transformed by the power and wisdom of Christ. Tending to the natural world at home or on the church grounds also teaches us about seasonal cycles and life cycles, and the remarkable interactions of ecosystems. We begin to think of trees and other green plants as the lungs of the planet; water as her blood.

We follow Jesus, not only by listening to his words, but also by sharing in his experience of human life as a path of service without ultimate control; a way of affirming life liberated from the fear of death. Tending to the natural world produces sustenance, beauty, patience and hope as we develop our confidence in God’s beneficent presence in our world, like Jesus in Galilee.

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Practicing mindful gardening begins to inspire doubt as to whether building personal monuments or achieving status is really the purpose of life. At some point, we may even have a transfiguring mountaintop experience that enables us to discover that physical strength, brain-power and material wealth, though very useful, are not nearly as influential or lasting as love-power. We may come to see the wisdom of practicing kindness and vulnerability as we tend to God's gardens of truth, beauty and goodness. We discover, often to our great relief, that age is not an obstacle to being a loving, caring presence. In fact, the comforting touch of a nonagenarian can be more tender than that of a 20-year-old.

We also learn that loving is a form of dying. However, after we die in countless small ways, tending to God's natural world can teach us that our real dying is just the last and best opportunity to trust a gracious God who has illumined all our days. In this way, bright promise and luminous hope can conquer frightening and dark despair.

Maybe this insight was part of the inspiration for a quote that the German Confessing Church used to inspire hope and perseverance during its opposition to the Nazi dictatorship: "If I knew the world was to end tomorrow, I would still plant an apple tree today."

Landscaping

Many thanks to Wes Ingrum, Paul Wentink, and Kathy Hollo for helping to weed around our grounds. Bob Carper and Marty Frisvold have also spent time weeding. It will continue to be a large task until we can gradually transform our grounds to a sustainable garden.

Kathy has given us some more perennial starts from her lovely garden, and I am nurturing some starts to set out when they are robust enough. Kathy has donated some additional hoses and our new faucets will allow us to get water more easily to our developing plantscapes.

I have attended several events where sustainable ways of gardening are being discussed, and I am following some leads about getting grants and in some cases volunteer crews for landscape projects. Patience is a necessary tool for a gardener, and we hope it will result in a beautiful and responsible setting for our congregational home.

Carolyn Terry

This Old House of God....Building Update

The Parish Hall and kitchen continue to be posted on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) commercial leasing site. If you know anyone that is interested in leasing the space, please have them contact Tony Hettler.

Neighborhood House will be hosting an open house on August 20, 2017 during coffee hour. Please join us down in the Neighborhood House and Sunday school class room level to learn more about the good work that our tenants are doing in the community and see the building renovations....I think you will be pleasantly surprised!!

Bob Knutson has just installed awesome outside, LED security lights. And because they are energy efficient, St. E will save money monthly and get a rebate from the power company. Many thanks to Bob for a job well done. Shine on!.

We have moved back into the Zechariah kitchen and the space is fully functional (including the dishwasher)!! All of the St. Elizabeth cabinets are labeled with the contents. The Neighborhood House cabinets are not labeled but will have locks on them in the near future. Now that we are sharing the space with tenants, we will need to make sure that we keep the kitchen neat, clean and uncluttered. Please do not leave any dishes, utensils or food items in the kitchen.

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The Elizabethan is published monthly by St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church. The deadline for articles is the fourth Friday of each month.

Articles, calendar items and ideas may be mailed or emailed to the addresses below or left in *The Elizabethan* box in the Parish Office.

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Work in progress –

The north side building water heater (Zechariah, ambulatory, rest rooms, and nursery) and roof top ventilation fan need to be replaced. We are getting bids for installation of a more cost efficient model.

We are finally finishing the cement sidewalk and asphalt work that is required because of the winter flooding/drainage work. The schedule has not been set but we anticipate being complete by the end of September. Sections of the driveway and walkways will be closed off during the work.

Westside office windows are going to be re-glazed and sealed in August.

The plans for long-term maintenance of the building and grounds need to be addressed. If you have a desire to share your talents, please contact Carolyn Terry.

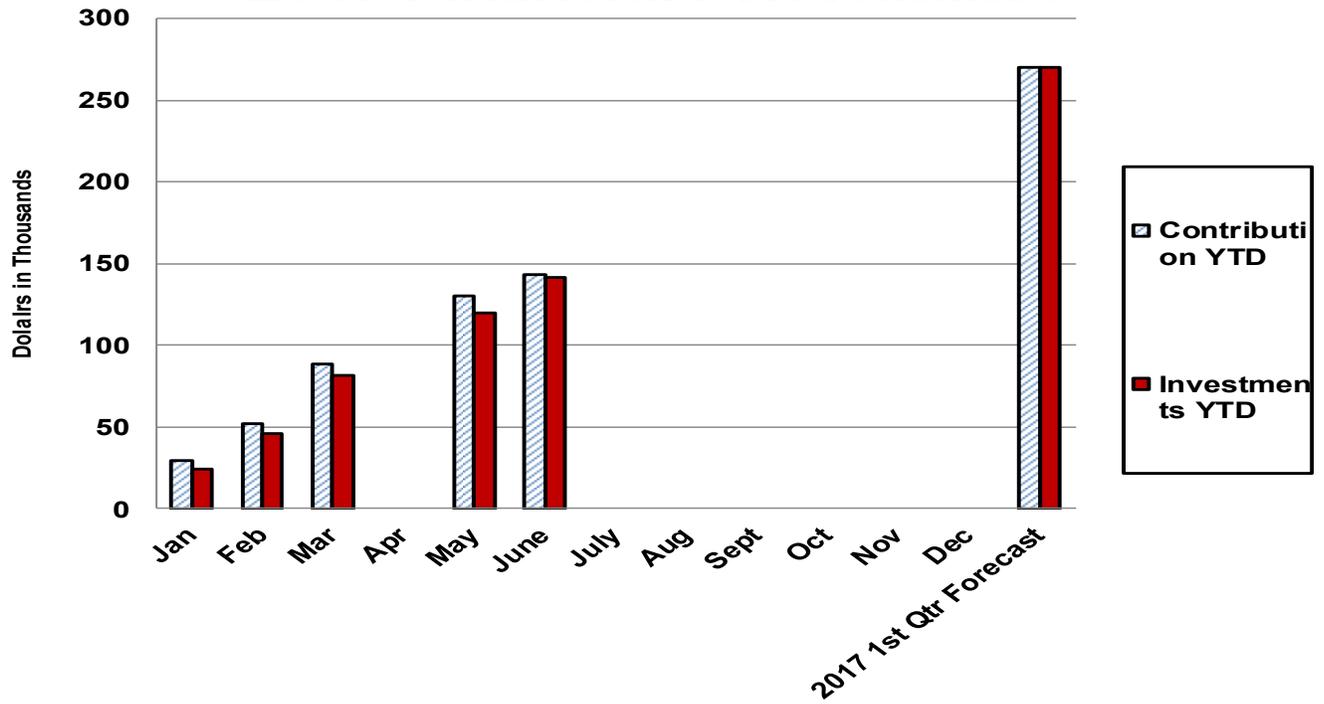
Linda Knutson

St Elizabeth welcomes Neighborhood House

Since 1906, Neighborhood House has been serving diverse communities in Seattle and King County. Partnering with individuals and families, Neighborhood House works to build community and achieve their goals for health, education and self-sufficiency through culturally and linguistically relevant services. Their two newly renovated classrooms at St. Elizabeth's offer full day, center-based care to 16 low-income toddlers as part of the Early Head Start program. The teachers work to foster a culturally responsive environment for diverse and multilingual families and build family partnerships through parent engagement in the program planning. To learn more about their work, visit www.nhwa.org.

Neighborhood House has invited St. Elizabeth to come and see the new spaces they have created for little ones on August 20th after church. Please come and help us welcome them to the building!

St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church 2017 Financial Performance



St. Elizabeth has met their financial plans through the 1st half 2017

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St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church

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