

# The Elizabethan



The Newsletter of St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church    Burien, Washington

March 2019

## **From Fr. John: Reconciliation of a Penitent at St. Elizabeth**

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, encourages all Anglicans to adopt the practice of taking part in the “Reconciliation of a Penitent.” If that phrase sounds unfamiliar, you might recognize it as “going to confession.” Many people associate the sacrament with Roman Catholicism, but we, too, have a version of the ritual. Or, more accurately, we have access to at least two forms of the rite.

The Book of Common Prayer defines the sacramental ritual, the Reconciliation of a Penitent, or Penance, as “the rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest, and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution. “(BCP 361)

Unlike the Roman Catholic version, Anglican priests typically meet parishioners to hear confession face to face, in their own offices or church naves, without such trappings as confessional booths. The ritual can also be done in homes or hospitals, depending on circumstances.

Archbishop Welby comes from the evangelical wing of Anglicanism, which may be why he describes private confession as “...really uncomfortable.” And he acknowledges his own personal struggles: “I’m an Archbishop; I know about the absence of humility. I struggle with it.” Yet, more importantly, he also recognizes that “through it God releases forgiveness and absolution and a sense of cleansing.”

Episcopalians often include a collective, general confession at Masses, except through the season of Pascha, but an individual confession is a somewhat different experience. Confession is not required, but approached with humility and candor, it is enormously powerful and only momentarily painful, although as the Archbishop has said: “I doubt you wake up in the morning and think, this is going to be a bunch of laughs.” The phrase that sums up the church’s recommendation around individual confession is that “all may, none must and some should.”

Ironically, people working various 12-step programs consider the heart of the work — all but four steps — to be essential to recovery. Beginning with a “searching and fearless moral inventory,” they confess their wrongs to God and to another person as preparation for asking God’s help with humility. Then they try to make amends wherever it is possible and appropriate, and continue their self-inventory.

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Strangely, many church folk think of have come to think of confession as a more marginal practice. In fact, reconciliation is the Church's primary business! Forgiveness and reconciliation are central to our understanding of the Gospels. Baptism is the sacrament in which we are made one with Christ's death and resurrection by the power of the Holy Spirit and in that way are reconciled to God. The Eucharist is the sacrament that draws us closer to God and to one another, in which the reconciliation accomplished in Baptism is nourished, deepened and enacted in the world.

The sacrament of reconciliation not only can be a significant encounter with Christ who pardons, heals and embraces us, it can reunite us with the church with all her glory and flaws, and can mark a dramatic milestone or shift in spiritual growth along the path of Christian spiritual practice. Episcopalians can make their confession anytime, though the season of Lent is particularly appropriate as we prepare ourselves for Pascha. If you would like to make a confession, please let Fr. John know and he will schedule a mutually acceptable time with you.

### **Coffee hour ministry**

Coffee time after Sunday Eucharist has many aspects: We greet guests, gather for listening to each other and sharing fun, the news, or the important and challenging events of a week.

Its a crucial time for becoming community. As we get to know each other we realize that there are many unique people at St. Elizabeth and a wide variety of talents. This leads to inviting others who are sometimes seeking friends and seeking their own Christian walk.

Teams of people continue to serve the community. Each Sunday, two or three or more have planned ahead for these opportunities. One snowy day last month, two women brought in the "groceries" for us on a Thursday. Over the next few days, grocery store shelves were depleted and car travel was tough. Because the two had planned ahead we still had coffee hour for the 36 who could make their way through the weather that Sunday.

Anyone can participate! If you want to be part of these teams, just talk to one of the regulars or sign on the bulletin board. You could even become a "certified barista" by asking Ryan Davis to train you to make the coffee that the church supplies!

### **Have a story for the Elizabethan?**

The snow kept us from publishing an edition of the Elizabethan last month, but we want to encourage more parish participation in creating content! Please give some thought to writing a few paragraphs about your history and experience with St. Elizabeth. The more we tell people about what happens here and why people are drawn to this place, the more people we attract. How did you come to find St. Elizabeth? From where? More importantly, what keeps you coming back? Tell your story and send it to Fr. John!

## Adult Formation

We refer to assassinations, murders and executions from throughout all history. On Sunday morning, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 9:00 a.m. in the St. John Room, we will talk about the only death that we consistently name by method: the crucifixion. The physical, emotional and social violence involved in the killing of Jesus is not for the faint-hearted, but Pascha follows Good Friday.

On the following Sunday mornings of Lent, we'll pray the Stations of the Cross in the nave at 9:00 a.m. We will be using the "Scriptural Stations," based on those celebrated by Pope John Paul II on Good Friday 1991. They are an alternative to the traditional stations and offer a way of reflecting more deeply on the scriptural accounts of the passion.

**Tuesday Adult Formation:** Our Associate priest, Fr. John Fergusson asked people for suggestions for topics for Tuesday Adult Formation classes and a question came up: Why do we make Jesus a holy pattern for our lives?

Finding the question intriguing, Fr. John created classes on "The Jesus Life Pattern: Why, What & How." The three-part series continues on February 26<sup>th</sup> and the third and final class will also be offered twice on March 5<sup>th</sup>. There will be a 3:00 p.m. and a 7:00 p.m. section of the class each Tuesday of the series.

All are invited! Come join us. It'll be interesting, informative and a good source of ideas for planning your Lenten observance!!

## The Elizabethan

*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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## Chaplains on the Harbor

The Reverend Sarah Monroe is the founder and priest-in-charge of “Chaplains on the Harbor.” She will be joining us next month on Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, the first Sunday in Lent, as an assisting priest and guest preacher. Mother Sarah works with three other chaplains and a farm manager in an on-going and impressive ministry to the poor of Grays Harbor, especially in and around Aberdeen and Westport, Wash.

As a community within the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, “Chaplains on the Harbor” stands alongside the poor of Grays Harbor who have lost resources, land, and spirit, by providing spiritual and material support to people in jail and on the streets. They help people toward healing, and development of leadership and expertise, and they help build regenerative community ownership through community-led social enterprise and job creation.

For example, they are now beginning the second season of Harbor Roots Farm by expanding operations: a new farm site, new hires, more acreage and more food to grow. Last year, they successfully supplied weekly Community Supported Agriculture shares to twenty-two paying members, and donated several additional shares to low-income people in the area. CSA is a way to buy local food directly from a farmer. Each share makes a person a farm “member,” who then receives vegetables or other farm products regularly throughout the growing season. CSA is a powerful, proven investment in personal health, community building and the local economy.

Chaplains employ four apprentice farmers who, in addition to running Harbor Roots, lead the education, organization and mobilization of others on issues of poverty, addiction, and homeless people's human rights. They are involved from their home base in Grays Harbor County, to the steps of the Capitol building in Olympia, all the way to the U.S. Senate with the Poor People's Campaign. At his recent visit to the Diocese, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and Diocesan Bishop Greg Rickel both came out to COH's first ever public demonstration in Aberdeen, where they marched through downtown to the river encampment to listen to testimony from residents there, then back up to City Hall where Bishop Curry preached his spontaneous (and now famous) “Sermon on the Steps.”

COH is currently fundraising for more farm equipment to keep up with their success. They need to buy a tractor, a tow-behind tiller, a new greenhouse, plastic for weed-blocking our beds, pots and seeds. The farm provides paid apprenticeships for young adults getting released from drug treatment, out of jail and off the streets. In addition to creating decent jobs in a county with limited employment, Harbor Roots apprentices receive case management support as they work through legal, medical, and recovery-related issues.

Mother Sarah will be talking with us at coffee hour about this and their other ministries. If you can't come in person, you can donate by sending checks made out to Chaplains on the Harbor to our mailing address: P.O. Box 66579, Burien, WA, 98166. We will see that they get delivered to this unique church presence.

## Operation Nightwatch

The people of St. Elizabeth have been collecting socks, personal hygiene products, shoes, clothing and money for nearly five years for the folks at Operation Nightwatch. To date, we have given more than 3,000 pairs of new, white sweat socks. And yet, not everyone in the parish knows about this remarkable ecumenical outreach organization serving people in the greater Seattle area who are experiencing homelessness.

Nightwatch began in 1967 when Pastor Bud Palmberg from Mercer Island Covenant Church went into downtown Seattle one evening after choir practice to look for a troubled child from his congregation who had been drifting with other folks along the west coast. He followed some homeless young people into an abandoned house on First Hill and got into an in-depth conversation with them. And he kept going back. After choir practice, Bud would drive into downtown Seattle to visit his new friends.

Over the next 50 years, the number of homeless people grew dramatically. But so did Nightwatch. Volunteers started cooking meals. A day program agreed to let Nightwatch clients stay overnight. In 1999, Nightwatch bought and remodeled a building at 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and South Main, where the upper two floors could provide living space for 24 low-income seniors. Their upgraded commercial kitchen let them start a meal service in 2000 that dozens of area churches from all denominations have volunteered for and donated to.

The street ministry started by Pastor Palmberg is still at the heart of Operation Nightwatch. Clergy and religious from a variety of denominations still join Rev. Rick Reynolds, the Executive Director, on evening outings to make friends and help them move toward housing, treatment, employment or even back with friends or family. Street ministers bring socks, bottled water, hot pizza, peanut butter sandwiches, and other supplies, depending on need and availability. (Fr. John's father, Fr. Kim Forman, was a regular volunteer street minister who found his truest "parish" and deepest call in his walks with Rick.)

We still collect socks, toiletries and other needs in the canvas bin by the door to the nave. Fr. John makes regular visits to his friend and former classmate, Shelter Dispatch Center Manager Liz Fenn. These small things help "to reduce the impact of poverty and homelessness, in keeping with Jesus' teaching to love our neighbors."

And if you are not in a position to donate, prayer is requested and welcomed for the team, the volunteers and the people they serve. They ask our prayers especially for those with mental health issues, for immigrants, and for those struggling with addiction or working toward recovery.



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“Let us stress once more that the purpose of Lent is not to force on us a few formal obligations, but to soften our heart so that it may open itself to the realities of the spirit, to experience the hidden thirst and hunger for communion with God.”

~ **Fr. Alexander Schmemmann**

## **Coffee and conversation:**

The next opportunity to come for an informal “get-to-know-you” chat will be on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. Come and chat over coffee and such from 10 a.m. to noon in the St John room at St Elizabeth. Come and enjoy coffee, cookies and conversation. We hope this can be a casual place for parishioners, interested friends and curious neighbors to get more acquainted with each other in small groups outside our worship together as a larger congregation. If you are interested in hosting one of these monthly events, Janey Montgomery has put up a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the library. Please join us and bring a friend. All are welcome!