

*News  
from the  
Mountain Top*  
+++++  
*September 2023*



*Good  
Shepherd  
Episcopal  
Church*

**Breathing Deeply with God**, by *Penelope Yungblut*



On Pentecost Sunday (May 28), Rob Banse gave a sermon in which he repeated the phrase “breathing deeply with God.” I resonated to that phrase. It made me ask myself, how do I breathe with God? And I wondered, how do you? **How does each of us experience God’s presence in our life? Let’s share and learn from one another!**

What might it look like to share how we breathe deeply with God? I would suggest that on Sundays in January and February we do this over coffee after the Sunday service. Each of us could take a turn on a Sunday to share how we breathe deeply with God. Afterwards, we would reflect together. Already Penni has offered to share on the topic “breathing deeply with God through movement;” Lois on “breathing deeply with God through service;” Charlene on “breathing deeply with God with food.”

Some of you have told me there are more ways than one in which you breathe deeply with God. Great, there is no need for there to be only one way! You are welcome to have more than one turn. Furthermore, if your sharing includes an activity enabling us to experience how you breathe deeply with God, all the better. We want to learn from each other and live into one another’s experience as much as possible.

Sharing makes us vulnerable. Let’s all participate so we are in this together. We are a safe and caring community in which we seek to listen for and follow God’s will and be all we are meant to be. This sharing is by us and for us, where it stays.

I look forward to hearing what each will share, enabling me to collect and organize our responses in advance. I am available in person, via text (703-431-7508), or by email ([penelope.yungblut@icloud.com](mailto:penelope.yungblut@icloud.com)). Please do not hesitate to contact me. Thanks!

**Holy Ground**, by *Martha Clark*



This summer, Bryan and I started off on a two month driving trip across country. We didn’t want to simply be tourists but hoped our journey could be more of a pilgrimage, “... a journey, often into an unknown or foreign place, where a person goes in search of new or expanded meaning about their self, others, nature, or a higher good through the experience...to go on pilgrimage is not simply to visit a place to admire its treasures of nature, art or history...but to step out of ourselves in order to encounter God where the Holy has revealed itself.”

We brought *The Creation Care Bible Challenge* with us, the summer study guide which our Good Shepherd friends were meeting weekly to discuss together. During long stretches of driving,

Bryan and I followed the Creation Care readings, reflections and questions. As we journeyed through grand canyons, high desert and towering red, orange brown cliffs of the American Southwest, we shared a sense of awe in the vast stunning beauty of the land. There is nothing like camping under the stars on Navajo tribal land to deepen gratitude toward the interconnectedness of all living things and to be reminded of the harmony, the “shalom” that God intends for us all in creation.

We experienced God in this ‘wild land.’ Traveling 13 miles down a dirt road, ‘off grid’ in the middle of the Chama Canyon Wilderness, New Mexico. Bryan and I spent several days as retreat guests at the **Benedictine Monastery of Christ in the Desert**. The monastery is surrounded by



Bryan painting  
“A Pilgrim’s Path”

protected land, with stunning rock cliffs, mountains covered with wild Sage and Juniper, and the Chama River wending its way by. It is a place of solitude and beauty, where we joined in the observance of holy silence and the monastic lifestyle of "ora y labora," work and prayer...and, if you are Bryan, a few hours of oil painting each day!

The monks live close to the earth. They practice their own forms of 'creation care' growing their own food, raising sheep and chickens, working as artisans with their hands. They are committed to sustainable stewardship as one way to participate in God's intentions and active care for our world. Their energy source for electricity and water pumping is solar-powered. The monastery chapel, living spaces and guest house are built of adobe brick and responsibly harvested wood. It is one of the most simple and beautiful sacred spaces in the world (see their website and statement of Commitment to Sustainable Stewardship at <https://christdesert.org>)



"A Pilgrim's Path"  
by Bryan K. Zidek  
(Oil on Linen) 2023

"I feel humbled in this environment," Bryan said to me one day. Yes! We cannot help but be humbled by "The Greatest Earth on Show," as one Utah billboard put it. **We are small and limited creatures but we have been given this vocation as co-partners with God to care for and steward 'this fragile earth, our island home' which we have inherited. Together we stand on holy ground.**

### A Summer of Faith, Family, and Friends, by Catherine Macoy

After a busy and high-speed 10<sup>th</sup> grade school year at Clarke County High, it was time for me to relax and work on my own personal development for a while. My goal for the summer was to grow in my faith, relationships, and culture by being mindful, experiencing positive opportunities, and by working on bettering my daily habits.

To expand my faith I was mindful in praying for strength, discernment, and most especially, the fruits of the spirit. I asked every morning that God would give me the gifts I needed for that day's purpose so that I could emulate joy and sow the seeds of the harvest He wanted to reap. The positive opportunities I partook of to deepen my relationship with God came in the form of a teen girls' bible study called ROOTS. Run by an amazing woman in Leesburg, around 40 teenaged girls would meet once a week over the summer to study the book of Esther. Going to bible study was always the highlight of my week. It was a perfect environment to be gracious towards new people, allowed me to meet inspiring new friends, and taught me more about God's word and his mysterious ways. **Prayer and bible study became my habits in faith this summer as I read the word daily and prayed whenever I found myself in a situation in which I felt the need to call upon God.**



Kelly and Catherine at Wolf Trap

This summer I wanted to dive deep into spreading God's love to others. Surrounding myself with family and friends while bringing my new found mindfulness and prayer along for the ride, really helping me achieve the growth I strive for. In the beginning of the summer, my friends and I held the annual nature camp we created a

few years ago. This year we expanded the camp to two weeks long and were able to impact the lives of forty kids as well as their families. The camp is constructed so that families with children of different ages are able to send all of their kids to camp for the week. Ranging from the ages of four to eight, we wanted to offer a camp to kids that have yet to experience many of the larger day camps in our area. We taught the children about nature and God's love, all while helping them experience new environments so they can learn to adapt and enjoy new things. Every year the kids can hardly wait to go to nature camp and it is so rewarding to see their faith, knowledge, and friendships grow.

My house this summer was a whirlwind of cleaning, organizing, and preparing. Why, you might ask? My family and I are hosting an exchange student! It is impossible to list all of the exciting things about this exchange, but essentially, our student, Adina, gets to experience America; as an only child, I get to learn to live with others; and all around we as a family are growing in flexibility, spontaneity, and culture. **The memories and relationships that we build this year, I'm sure, will be some of the greatest blessings I will ever receive.**

Also on the topic of culture, I took an online Art History course through Laurel Ridge Community College this summer. By taking this class and one other before the time I graduate high school, I will be able to enter college with a certificate of general education, allowing for more time to study abroad or take other courses I am interested in. The course was fascinating and greatly expanded my knowledge and appreciation of historical art.

*Created for her art history class, Catherine designed this work to represent the Shenandoah Valley in a Byzantine Mosaic style.*



Of course, it wouldn't be a summer without relaxation. This year we visited my family in Fairfield, Connecticut and my family in Brevard, North Carolina. I was able to bring along one of my best friends on our Connecticut trip and we had an amazing time making hilarious and heartfelt memories. The North Carolina mountains never fail to put me at ease and gave me the perfect terrain to prepare for my driver's license test. Seeing my grandparents is always wonderful. We were able to hike, eat at nice restaurants, and attend a Grieg and Nielsen event put on by the orchestra of their local music college. At home, my mother and I went to see an orchestral work that is very important to us: the NSO performed *The Planet Suite* at the Wolf Trap Filene Center.

This summer was even better than I could have hoped for. I saw personal development that I am very proud of and made memories that I will cherish forever. As I enter into this school year, my goals are now focused on serving my community and enjoying the time I have with my exchange sister. I hope you all had a fulfilling summer!

## Creation Care Corner

Our Prayer & Meditation Garden continues to grow, with additions of many new plants and mulch this summer. The dry weather was a bit of a challenge for the new plants. But thanks to everyone who has come out to water and help spread mulch. Our next big undertaking will be preparing the soil and planting the pollinator garden, which is bordered by the stone sitting wall. Contact Cindy or Janet if you have any plants to donate and/or if you'd like to get your hands dirty. We are planning an official dedication ceremony in the spring of 2024. But the garden is available for you to enjoy right now.

In recognition of St. Francis of Assisi, whose life and example is celebrated in the church on October 4<sup>th</sup>, we've designated the all of October as **Animal Awareness Month at Good Shepherd**. There will be multiple opportunities to have your animals blessed (see calendar below) and we will be collecting pet food and other items to support our furry friends at the Clarke County Animal Shelter. Tell your neighbors!



## A Festival for the Jesus Movement, *by Tim & Judy Hall*

We were looking for a bit of spiritual renewal and refreshment this summer, so on our way to visit Tim's sister in New Hampshire we stopped off in Baltimore to attend "It's All About Love," a churchwide festival of worship, learning, community, and action for the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. From July 9 thru 12 we enjoyed countless blessings at the festival, held at the Baltimore Convention Center next to the Inner Harbor. The festival ignited and fanned the flames of mission and love that is part of the ongoing revival of The Episcopal Church.

Sunday evening started with a worship service of live praise music, dramatic Gospel reading, and a sermon by Bishop Michael Curry. He is an amazing preacher and if you have ever watched one of his sermons, you know it is "all about Love". Each morning and evening we gathered for very lively worship and poignant plenary speakers and sermons. To try to summarize any of these would not do them justice. Please spend some time on the Episcopal Church website and watch as many speakers as you can. It is definitely not a waste of time. You will be touched, if not shaken.

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/its-all-about-love/>

During the day we were able to choose from a variety of workshops and huddles. The topics ranged from racial reconciliation to creation cares to evangelism and church growth. But the most exciting part was to meet Episcopalians from all over the U.S. and abroad, who were being revived with us. We lunched one day with this lovely young lady who immigrated to this country to experience the same religious awakening with Cursillo that I had experienced 30 years before.



## Church Calendar – All are welcome!

**SUN Sep. 17,** 11 a.m. – The 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Morning Prayer with Tim Hall

**FRI Sep. 22,** 6:30 p.m. – Congregational Game Night in the Parish Hall

**SUN Sep. 24,** 11 a.m. – The 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Holy Eucharist with Rev. Deb Rutter

**WED Sep. 27,** 9 a.m. – FISH Food Collection donations due in Narthex for month of September delivery

**SUN Oct. 1,** 11 a.m. – The 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Morning Prayer with Josette Keelor

**SAT Oct. 7,** 9 to 11 a.m. – FISH Community Table: Social and food distribution

**SUN Oct. 8,** 11 a.m. – The 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Holy Eucharist and Pet Blessing with Rev. Martha Clark

**SUN Oct. 15,** 11 a.m. – The 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Morning Prayer with Cindy Ingram

**SAT Oct. 21,** 9 to Noon – Free Community Breakfast and drop-in Pet Blessing

**SUN Oct. 22,** 11 a.m. – The 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Holy Eucharist with Rev. Martha Clark

**WED Oct. 25,** 9 a.m. – FISH Food Collection donations due in Narthex for month of October delivery

**SUN Oct. 29,** 11 a.m. – The 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Healing and Holy Eucharist with the Rev. Deb Rutter, followed by delivery of collected items to the Animal Shelter, with prayers and blessings for animals and staff.

Join by Zoom, at our website, [www.goodshepherdbluemont.org](http://www.goodshepherdbluemont.org), and click the link on the home page.

### Spiritual Practices Retreat 2023

Friday to Sunday, October 27 – 29

Come spend a weekend at Claggett, the beautiful Episcopal Diocese of Maryland church conference center, located in rural Adamstown, MD (less than an hour away from Good Shepherd).

Deepen your prayer practices during this weekend of reflection and meditation. Workshops include the Ignatian practice of Examen, meditative movement, Lectio Divina, Anglican Prayer beads, and more!

Come learn a new spiritual practice or deepen your existing prayer life in community with others. **Rev. Martha Clark, one of our supply priests, will be helping to lead the retreat.**

Prices vary depending on the housing option you select.

Go to the [www.claggettcenter.org/events/103](http://www.claggettcenter.org/events/103) for details and to register. All meals and retreat registration are included with the price of your accommodations. A \$50 non-refundable deposit will hold your space.



## Outreach



AA meets at Good Shepherd every Saturday night at 8:30 pm, in person or by Zoom. Drop in or contact: <https://aavirginia.org/meetings> and search for Bluemont.



FISH of Clarke County (36 E. Main St., Berryville) The FISH clothing store and food pantry are open 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Visitors should wear face masks. Anyone not able to stop by when FISH is open may contact FISH at 540-955-1823 or via email at [fishfoodpantry@comcast.net](mailto:fishfoodpantry@comcast.net) to schedule delivery.