

Episcopal Church of Our Saviour
Newsletter No. 15 *Easter Season Issue* May 11, 2021

Moving Forward with Boldness and Creativity

We are in the Great 50 Days of Easter when we celebrate God's promise of the resurrected life. This is an ideal time to reflect on what resurrected life means for us as individual Christians and as a faithful congregation serving all of God's people. Jesus summarized his mission when he said: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18-19

This past weekend, our Vestry had a very successful retreat as we discussed how we can faithfully carry out our mission as described by Jesus. During the pandemic, we adopted digital technology to find innovative ways to carry out our ministry to reach more people and serve those who might not otherwise visit us in person at church.

As we move into a time when the pandemic restrictions are being gradually eased and more people are getting vaccinated, it's important that we think boldly and creatively about how we carry out our mission and ministry. I invite all of you to consider these questions and share your thoughts with me and your **Vestry** members (**Tom Bryan, Leslie Farris, Grace Sears, Bob Kilbourn, Zachary Grider** and **Michele Gore**).

Almost all churches proclaim that "Everyone is welcome." What makes our church a distinctive community in Madison County and how do we communicate that well to other people?

What prophetic action can we undertake to promote peace and justice locally and beyond?

How are people hurting in our community and what can we do to help them?

How can we best serve the needs of youth in our parish?

How can we best serve the needs of the elderly in our parish?

How can we best serve our members, who are unable to attend regularly due to physical limitations, lack of transportation, work commitments, or other reasons?

How can we best serve members of the LGBTQ community in our parish and in Madison County?

How can we educate ourselves and others about the sin of systemic racism and work toward racial reconciliation in building the beloved community envisioned by God for all God's people?

How do we engage visitors who are joining us virtually through our Facebook Page and YouTube Channel?

How can we make online access to our worship services and sharing of information about our church more personal in reaching people and responding to their interests?

I encourage all of you to prayerfully consider these important questions and share your thoughts and ideas with us. Blessings and God's Peace, **Mother Carol+**

News from the Evangelism Committee

Hello everyone! The Evangelism Committee wants you to know what we have been doing! For your information, current committee members are **Grace Sears, Leslie Farris, Rachel Cook, Stephen Locke** and myself, as chairperson. My wife, **Karon** is an ex-officio member. We welcome suggestions from everyone.

Let's discuss Episcopalian Evangelism. Our style of Evangelism involves getting to know people, listening to the story of their lives and then sharing ours to include why we are Christians!! This Evangelism is designed to be warm, welcoming, non-judgmental, inviting and loving. It is not the typical picture of Evangelism (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses and tent meetings.)

To better share Christ's message with everyone, our committee has been studying a course from the National Episcopal Church called *Embracing Evangelism*. This course is a series of 6 videos, discussions about them, and then sharing parts of our own life stories in an open and honest way.

By doing this, the story of Christ's influence in our own lives is not threatening. This summer, the committee will share the course with the congregation!!! Then, all of us will be better equipped to bring others to Christ.



T-shirt logo

The Evangelism Committee is very thankful that the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour has many outreaches! These provide a golden opportunity to get to know people. We can then tell a story and discuss what Christ means to us. We feel our name ECOS, needs to be better known in the community. T shirts, with the name of the church on them, will tell others who we are when we volunteer. This opens opportunities to tell others about Christianity. Jesus last message to His followers was, "Go, tell the world about Me!" We want to spread that message to our part of the world.

Also, a new sign to be placed closer to our location, readable on both sides, is to be recommended to the Vestry. The design of the sign is beautiful. It echoes the design of the church building. Letters are carved into the sign and gilded so that they will be permanent and visible. It will be lit from both sides by l.e.d. lights. It is to be hand carved with recessed letter and designed to last for 50 years or more. This will be beautiful as well as tasteful.

The Evangelism Committee is encouraging everyone to participate in "*Thy Kingdom Come*". We are asking that all of us pray, from Ascension Day (May 13th) to Pentecost (May 23rd). We ask that you pray for 5 specific people known to you will come to know Christ. *Thy Kingdom Come* is an international Anglican movement endorsed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Curry and our own Bishop Mark.

The Evangelism Committee is involved in many other activities. I will discuss these in the near future.

Agape, **Glen Click**.

Hymns from Creation to Creation Care

As we prepare for Rogation Sunday and the Blessing of the Garden, there is much to do, to think about, study about, and pray about--but there is also much to sing about! In fact, the intriguingly-named organization "Interfaith Power and Light" (that began in California as "Episcopal Power and Light") provides a long list of hymns appropriate for this season: <https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Creation-Centered-Hymns.pdf>



"All creatures of our God and King," an adaptation of St. Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of the Sun", is one of the best known of these and the story behind it is compelling. St. Francis took on a life of poverty and founded monastic orders. But it was not until 1225, near the end of his life,

that he wrote “Canticle of the Sun.” The story is that he had developed a type of blindness in which he could not tolerate sunshine or bright light. The nuns in a convent he had founded built him a hut in their garden. Passers-by in the garden heard him singing and preaching to the birds and animals. It is believed that he wrote most of “Canticle of the Sun” based on Psalm 148 while at a meal with the sisters of the convent. However, he added a verse about death (verse 6 in our Hymnal “And even you most gentle death...”) shortly before his death, and the entire hymn was sung with him on his deathbed. The song was translated into English and paraphrased by William Draper, an Anglican priest in the UK, for a children’s Pentecost festival in 1910. The repeated “Alleluia” and “O praise Him” were added by Draper and the tune comes from a German folk melody. (On a personal note: My brother and I chose this hymn for our mother’s funeral because of her love of flowers, birds, gardens, and nature in general. When I mentioned this to our former parishioner, Martie Conaway, in 1990, she immediately said “That’s what I want sung at my funeral” and many years later we honored her wish.) There is also a second translation of “Canticle of the Sun” in our *Hymnal 1982*, “Most high omnipotent Lord God” (#406/407) written by an Episcopal priest from Pennsylvania. The *Hymnal* gives two tunes to choose from, but without added “alleluias” and “O praise him,” making them, in my opinion, much less festive.

Many other hymns in praise of God’s creation followed. However, we may be seeing the start of a new trend with a focus on “creation care.” As early as the 1960s, the National Council of Churches began developing an environmental agenda and its member denominations and many local congregations followed suit. More recently, some evangelical Protestants have done likewise, leading to the creation of the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) in 1993. With this new emphasis, could hymns be far behind? Thus, in the *Hymnal 1982* a new verse was added by a descendent of the original author of “This is my Father’s world” (#651) that included the phrase “He trusts us with his world, to keep it clean and fair.” More pointedly, in 2019, an “updating” of the hymn “Eternal Father strong to save,” ends with the words “From global warming, rising seas, and leaders who ignore our pleas, O help us fight the apathy, and heal the land and nurse the sea.” And as a final example, the recent hymn “O God creator of all things” by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, a Presbyterian minister and prolific hymnwriter, ends with a verse that is not eloquent but is certainly relevant:

“We thank you, Lord, for neighbors' lands that grow organic food,
For co-op stores and produce stands that seek the common good,
For biking trails that clear the air, and trees that clean it, too,
For garden plots that neighbors share, for all who work for you.”

https://www.carolynhymns.com/o_god_creator_of_all_things.html

Sources:

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Jane Rainey, “‘What would Jesus drive?’ Steering Religious Lobbying in New Directions,” conference paper, 2004.

(submitted by **Jane Rainey**)

Philip Paul Bliss



Image credit: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Bliss

I recently wrote an article for our newsletter about Horatio Spafford and the tragedy that led him to write the words to the beautiful hymn "It Is Well with my Soul." The fate of the man who wrote the music to this song is equally interesting, sad, and inspiring. Philip Paul Bliss known as P.P. Bliss was born in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania in 1838 in a deeply religious home. He was a strong abolitionist and served as a Lieutenant for the Union Forces in the civil war. He was a Gospel singer, music teacher, and Hymn writer. He married Lucy Young in 1859 who strongly supported his musical efforts. Philip also joined her Presbyterian Church. They were blessed with two sons while Bliss secured what music training he could. In 1869, he attended an outdoor meeting led by Dwight Moody. Moody heard him singing and they met after the meeting. Moody asked him to join his organization as a singer at revival meetings. His main fame today is a number of hymns well known in many churches.

Besides writing the music for Spafford's: *It Is Well With my Soul*, Bliss also wrote *Let the Lower Lights Be Burning*, *Almost Persuaded*, *Wonderful Words of Life*, and numerous other hymns. I was raised in a Methodist Church, but often attended the Baptist Church as a teenager. We were all familiar with these hymns. In December 1776, Bliss and his wife left Buffalo on the Pacific Express in a blizzard. Close to the Ashtabula, Ohio station, the railroad crossed the Ashtabula Creek on a structurally deficient bridge. The bridge collapsed and cars fell into the ravine containing Ashtabula Creek. The gaslights and stoves caused the wooden cars to burst into flame. The rescue was difficult due to the 16 degree weather and the location of the wreck. Officially 96 people died including Bliss and his wife. This was the worst U.S. train wreck of the 19th century. Bliss was buried in a common grave in Ashtabula which now is marked by a prominent marker. This train wreck became known as the Ashtabula Horror and led to reforms in railroad safety. There is a museum dedicated to P.P. Bliss in Rome, Pennsylvania.

Submitted by **James Anderson**

Birthday and Anniversary Celebrations

Birthdays

Edwin Tait	5/13
Doug Wagner	5/27
Angie Rice	5/29
Elizabeth Woodruff-Tait	5/31

Anniversaries

Sally Evans	5/28
David and Michele Gore	5/30
Louise and Stephan Locke	5/21



If you would like to add any notifications or celebrations, please contact me at rukasa05@aol.com

Correction: I mistakenly listed Bob and Lesa Kilbourn's anniversary as May 3rd, when in actuality, Bob's birthday is on that date. Their Anniversary is Oct. 1st. Oops!

Parish Calendar



May 17: Vestry Meeting, 7:30 PM

May 23, Pentecost Sunday: Remember to wear Red to church

May 28 to June 4: Mother Carol and Alan on vacation

May 30: Guest Preacher, The Rev. Mary Kilbourn-Huey (Bob Kilbourn's sister)

June 20: Father's Day

Ancient Joke of the Week

A Christian guy named Bill saw an ad online for a Christian horse, so he went to check it out. The horse's owner said, "It's easy to ride him. Just say 'Praise the Lord!' to make him go and 'Amen!' to make him stop." Bill got on the horse and said, "Praise the Lord!" Sure enough, the horse started to walk. "Praise the Lord!" he said again, and the horse began to trot. "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!" he yelled, and the horse broke into a gallop. Bill was enjoying his ride so much that he almost didn't notice the cliff he and the horse were about to go over. Bill shouted "AMEN!" at the top of his lungs, and the horse stopped right at the edge of the cliff. Relieved, Bill said, "Phew! Praise the Lord!"

—Submitted by Z.S. via [rd.com](https://www.rd.com/jokes/religion/); <https://www.rd.com/jokes/religion/>