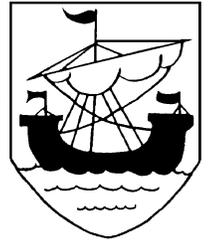


# Canterbury Tales



The Newsletter of St. Anselm's Church, Lafayette, California

July/August, 2020

## *From The Rector*

### Can We Find Common Ground?

I watched a documentary last night. Two prominent activists on opposite ends of the political spectrum were interviewed about a program they had started. Each person invited two friends who shared their views to a discussion group, where they picked a topic to engage.

The two folks who started the group were Joan Blades, co-founder of the progressive group MoveOn.org. She lives in Berkeley. The other person was Mark Meckler who co-founded the conservative Tea Party Patriots. He lives in Grass Valley.

While this might sound like a good recipe for at best a shouting match, the group actually found that they shared some common views:

- Financial Bailouts aren't right
- The prison-industrial complex has gotten out of hand

They also found that if they changed the terminology with which they spoke they agreed on more:

- 'Conservation of Energy' built consensus, 'Climate Change' distanced the participants
- 'States' Rights' distanced participants, 'Community Governance' helped them see each other's point of view

The documentary was the first episode of Sacred Ground: A Film-Based Dialogue Series on Race & Faith that was produced by the Episcopal Church. The week of August 10<sup>th</sup>, St. Anselm's will begin offering this ten-part series to participants, and I am inviting you to join.

The organizers of the program chose well in airing the coming-together moment between Blades and Meckler in the first episode. It has been my experience that once you start talking about racism, whether you are white and conservative or white and liberal there is ironic consensus- none of us want to dig deep on this one. Sure, we are willing to talk about racial justice, but the matter of race itself and how it has formed and benefited us, ALL of us-engaging that one can feel more like a minefield, and not like sacred ground.

But as people of faith we hope. We hope that the minefield will turn into sacred ground when we recognize that we aren't the only ones feeling this way, and others share our awkwardness from the very beginning. We hope that the minefield will turn into sacred ground as we consider that even though we didn't make things the way they are, we have benefited from them, and we are brave enough to consider how.

*(continued on page 2)*

## *Anselm's Angels*

*"Nothing in life is to be feared; it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."*

*~ Marie Curie*

A very big thank you to the following parishioners who continue to help St. Anselm's stay connected and operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Chris Young** for serving as our official cameraman and Zoom expert to make sure we all have access to Sunday services.

**Andrew Huddart** for adding music to our virtual services.

**Sara Nelson** for making weekly bank deposits.

Our virtual lectors and Lay Eucharist Ministers: **Wynne Bacon, Anne Brown, Katheryn Dunn, Sheila Gorsuch, Peter Grace, Pam Green, Palmer Hightower, Caroline Huddart, Marian Mulkey, Sara Nelson, Vicki Pappas, Liz Sutton, Eva Woo, and Allen & Dale Zhang.**

**Marian Mulkey** for coordinating calls to the homebound among us and her dedicated calling team: **Naomi, Chamberlain-Harris, Cindy Eisenberg, Vicki Pappas, Judy Peak, Abby Perry and Gerry Starr.**

## CONGRATULATIONS 2020 ST. ANSELM'S GRADUATE!

We inadvertently missed a graduate in our last issue of Canterbury Tales. Congratulations Jack!



Jack Carey  
BS, Engineering with a minor in Mathematics  
Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas

### ST. ANSELM'S HAS A VENMO ACCOUNT

We have had some requests to establish a St. Anselm's Venmo account so that folks who might want to support the church can do so without writing and mailing a check. If you already have the app installed on your mobile phone, you will find us either by **name (Saint Anselms)** or **@username (@st-anselms)**. If you do not have the app, the following instructions will assist you in getting set up:

- Download a Venmo mobile app: iOS & Android (Venmo does not have a Windows app)
- Open the Venmo app.
- Choose your sign-up method and create a secure password (between 8 and 32 characters long).
- Verify your phone number and email address.
- Add and verify a U.S. bank account, credit card, or debit card to make a payment.

Once the app is installed, click on the icon with pencil and square with a dollar sign. You will use the above name or @username to find Saint Anselms (you should recognize our profile photo of our lovely sanctuary). You will then go to the "Pay or Request" page where you type in an amount in the right corner. Below the name of the church you may designate the gift if you want. Toward the bottom of the screen you will click the blue box to "pay."

### FROM THE RECTOR

*(continued from page 1)*

And we hope that before we have even taken the first step, we are not fools to envision that the minefield itself can be transformed into sacred ground the instant we decide to step forward in faith, risking a limb to deepen a soul.

We are the broken who have gathered in a remembrance on Sunday mornings to be mended.

Join us!

John+

*Canterbury Tales* is the monthly newsletter of

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Editor: Cathy S. Witkay

Virtual Sunday Service:  
9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

St. Anselm's Staff  
The Rev. John Sutton, Rector  
The Rev. Naomi Chamberlain-Harris, Deacon  
Cathy Witkay, Office Manager

## *The Senior Warden*

### A Note on Kindness

*kind·ness*  
/'kīn(d)nəs/

*Noun*

*The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.*

It seems like such an innocuous word, kindness. So simple in its definition and meaning it would seem to be easily practiced. But in all honesty, kindness can be one of the hardest things to practice on a regular basis. It's easy to get lost in the world around us; in all the upheaval and uncertainty of the world we live in. And when we are lost, we lose sight of what matters most: being kind to one another. As people of faith, we know that kindness is one key to righteousness, as noted in Proverbs 21:21, "Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness and honor". But how do we practice kindness in such uncertain times? How do we continue to live our faith through kindness when the unknown lingers on our doorstep?

Practicing kindness can be one of the easiest things one can do, even with the world in such disarray around you. There are simple acts of kindness that you can achieve on a daily, even hourly basis if you are so inclined. But it does take practice. It is easy to get lost in ourselves and our own needs to the point we lose sight of what's going on around us and all of the opportunities we have to be kind to one another. Right now, one of the easiest things one can do to be kind is to wear a mask in public. That's it. It's just that simple. You can be having a rotten day, everything went wrong, and now you need to go the grocery store. When you get out of your car and put on that mask, you are performing one of the greatest acts of kindness possible. You are saying to those around you, "I care about you and your health".

There is another type of kindness, though, that is the hardest of all. Self kindness. By show of hands, how many of you are guilty of negative self talk? I mean, I know I can't see your hands, but I'm sure a number of you have them up. Speaking from experience, negative self-talk is incredibly destructive, but one of the easiest things to do. Imagine you made a list of things you needed to accomplish today. On that list is do a load of laundry, empty the dishwasher, and vacuum the living room. At the end of the day, you crossed off two things on that list. What do you focus on? The two you finished or the one you didn't? If you say the two you finished, you are in the minority. Most folks will focus on that one thing they didn't accomplish and get down on themselves for it. That is not being kind to yourself.

Kindness and compassion go hand in hand and are essential to what the world needs now to ensure we move forward. It is the driving force to understanding and helping those around us who are all living very different lives to ours. So let's all make a promise, right here, right now. Read this out loud and make the pledge with me:

"I promise to practice kindness today and every day. No matter how big or how small, each kindness matters. I will be kind and compassionate to those around me and, most importantly, I will be kind to myself."

We all have the capacity for kindness. So go out there and be kind to one another.

Shanda Young



THE *Episcopal* CHURCH 

# SACRED GROUND

A FILM-BASED DIALOGUE SERIES ON RACE AND FAITH



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## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE LENTEN SERIES: A COURSE ON RACIAL RECONCILIATION**

In our Lenten Series this year, both because of Covid-19 and our usual time constraints, we barely scratched the surface on the issues of racism and racial reconciliation. Meanwhile, the murder of George Floyd and others has brought the issue front and center in our consciousness.

Fortunately, we have a “continuing education” opportunity. The national Episcopal Church has a 10-week course on Racial Reconciliation called Sacred Ground. It is the course that Fr. John speaks about in his inspiring “From the Rector” words. It covers not just African Americans and Latinos, as we did in our series, but also Native Americans, Asian Americans, and South Pacific Islanders. Each week there is a documentary film, some readings, and discussion. There is no cost for the course. My sister, who is an Episcopal priest, did it with her congregation and highly recommends it. If you want more information, go to the church website [episcopalchurch.org](http://episcopalchurch.org). Scroll down until you see a small picture of a bridge, titled Racial Reconciliation and click on that.

We will be starting the course the week of August 10. Because of the uncertainty of when we will be able to meet face-to-face, we have decided to download and watch the documentaries at home, as well as the readings. We will do the discussion groups on Zoom. We will be sending out a survey to all who have expressed interest to see if daytime will work or if you need an evening time and what days will work.

In his sermon on June 21, Fr. John suggested that the Covid-19, shelter-in-place has enabled the focus on racism and police brutality, also allowing time for protests. I agree. It is a Kairos moment, a time of opportunity and grace, a time when redemption and significant change could take place. Speaking for myself, I have become aware, as never before, of police brutality and killings of people of color. I’ve heard on the news about the higher numbers of infections and deaths in the Native American and African American communities, due to systemic issues like inadequate health insurance, crowding, poor health. My nephew is married to a young Chinese American woman. She is afraid to leave their home, because she has been yelled at several times, told she caused the virus, told to “go back where you came from!”. Gabe Slavitt’s talk at our Lenten series was very moving, sharing how, as an elementary school kid, he was made fun of for his Hispanic looks. I always thought of myself as not being a racist. However, I have recently become aware, as never before, how, as a European American, I benefit from white privilege and from systemic racism and how unconscious stereotypical images still exist in me. As Leta Seletzky pointed out in her passionate presentation at our Lenten Series, we tend to think of the South as the place where racism exists. But - it exists in CA. It’s manifested here also in public policy, police violence, and mass incarceration.

All this has me eager to take Sacred Ground. I look forward to learning, soul-searching, and having discussions with my fellow St. Anselm’s members. I hope that our discussion can broaden to encompass what we as a church community can do to be a force for change. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry is calling for the creation of the Beloved Community, something Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called for, a community that includes all races and ethnicities, all equal. In 1965, my late husband, Brad, then rector of All Souls in Berkeley, went on the march from Selma to Montgomery. After the march, Dr. King and all the clergy met for a service at Brown Chapel. Dr. King told all of those with white skin to go home and to deal with their superiority and the deep-seated lies about race in themselves and their communities.

If you want to register for the course, Sacred Ground, you can let Cathy Witkay or me know. My e-mail address is: [annechalfantbrown@gmail.com](mailto:annechalfantbrown@gmail.com). My cell phone number is: (925) 788-0664. Also, if you have questions, please get in touch with me. One possibility, if you are thinking about taking the course but are not sure, is to watch the first week’s video, which is introductory, the one that Fr. John speaks about in his “From the Rector” column and come to the first discussion group.

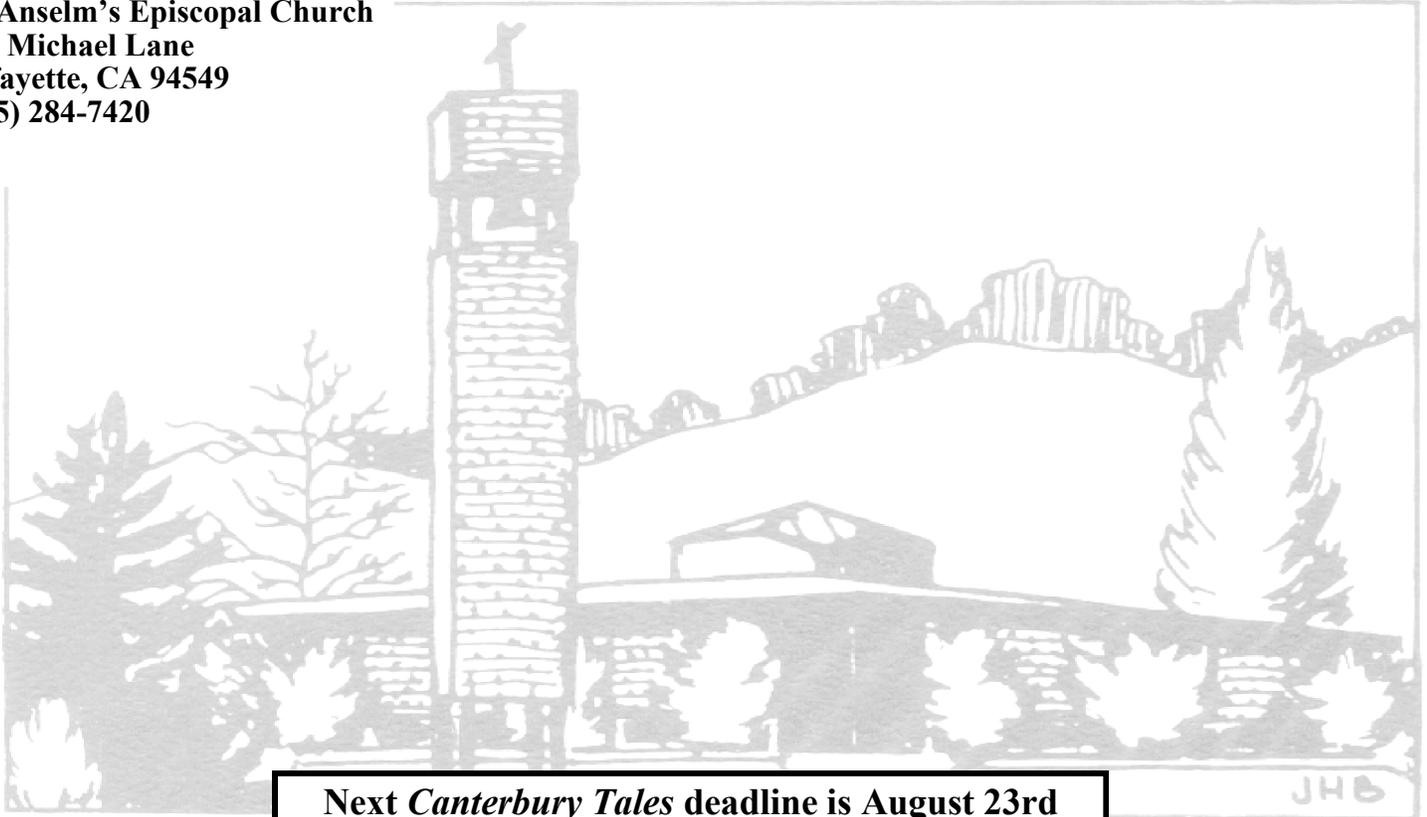
Amen. I hope and pray that can occur in each of us and in our church community, starting with all that we can learn in the course, Sacred Ground.

Anne Brown and the Christian Formation Commission

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**Next *Canterbury Tales* deadline is August 23rd**

### ***SCHEDULE OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS***

**July 27th, Vestry**, will meet via Zoom at 7:00 PM. Vestry members will receive an email from Father John with the meeting link.

**July 29th and each Wednesday in August, Morning Prayer** will be held via Zoom at 9:00 AM. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at [orchidsnrch@yahoo.com](mailto:orchidsnrch@yahoo.com).

**August 2nd, Cancer Support Group**, will meet via Zoom at 12:00 noon. To be invited, email Julie Rinkenberger at [jrjpmaggie@hotmail.com](mailto:jrjpmaggie@hotmail.com).

**August 4th, Grief Support Group** will meet via Zoom at 12:00 noon. To be invited, email Father John at [suttonj@comcast.net](mailto:suttonj@comcast.net).

**Week of August 10th, Sacred Ground** will begin via Zoom. Dates and times for future sessions will be determined. To be invited, email Cathy Witkay at [cathy.w@stanselms.ws](mailto:cathy.w@stanselms.ws).

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