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HoCo Landscaping 2023



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for more!*



A Message from Hilary +

Dear Friends and Companions in Ministry,

I've been watching "The Chosen," on Prime video recently. The show is about Jesus and those whom he called to follow him. I've known about this show for a while and had not wanted to watch it. I'm not sure exactly why but it probably has something to do with the perspective of those who choose to make movies about Jesus, which is often a conservative evangelical perspective. I don't like everything about the show but there is a lot that I do like.



The writers of "The Chosen," have taken artistic license and offer us a window into the world of Jesus and his first followers. I can imagine some of this world the way that they do, such as the daily struggles of the Jewish people living under the rule of an occupying force. The Romans required taxes from the people that crushed their dreams for a good life, in most cases. Romans degraded the people and treated them with disdain. Into this setting comes Jesus; and he brings an answer to the suffering of the people but not the answer that they expected. The Messiah was expected to overthrow the Romans with military might. Instead, Jesus invites them and us to a new way of life based on the values of the reign of God. Jesus invites everyone to live in the light of God's love, which may not change our material circumstances, such as having to pay taxes, but the invitation of Jesus to put God first and live with love for all makes everything and everyone new, different. Jesus gives us a new perspective that can change everything.

We meet Simon Peter, Matthew, Andrew, Thomas, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of Jesus, and all those who were close to Jesus. As Jesus reveals who he is and starts to heal and speak words familiar to us, but for the first time to those around him as the show depicts, I felt

awe and wonder, surprisingly. We know that the friends and followers of Jesus struggled to understand him; and "The Chosen" focuses on that. We see them argue with each other; they wonder if they can really let go of everything they have known and follow Jesus. Even with him there in the flesh, to encourage them and embrace them, it is not easy to be chosen by Jesus.

Jesus tells them and us, "You did not choose me. I chose you." We are more like those first followers whom Jesus chose than not. We struggle; we get distracted by the values of the world. We don't always agree about how to follow Jesus. We can be scared and confused. Knowing all of our human struggles and worldly concerns, Jesus turns to us, as he always has with those he has chosen, and encourages us with his love to keep trying and to be patient for all to be revealed. Jesus trusts us with his ministry more than we trust ourselves.

As we move into the Fall and the program year, we are wise when we look to Jesus for guidance and support. We do well to turn to God again and again with hope and trust as we pray for grace to be the people and the church God calls us to be. Blessings to you on your faith journey. Thankfully, we are in this together with God, and all will be well. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Peace be with you,

Hilary+

¡BIENVENIDOS! WELCOME!

El tercer domingo de cada mes tendremos un servicio bilingüe en español e inglés a las 10:00 de la mañana.

15 de octubre de 2023

19 de noviembre de 2023

17 de diciembre de 2023

On the 3rd Sunday of every month, we will have a bilingual service in Spanish and English at 10:00 am.

October 15, 2023

November 19, 2023

December 17, 2023



Un mensaje de Hilary +

Queridos amigos y compañeros en el ministerio,

He estado viendo “The Chosen” en Prime Video recientemente. El espectáculo trata sobre Jesús y aquellos a quienes llamó a seguirlo. Sabía de este programa hacía tiempo y no quería verlo. No estoy seguro exactamente de por qué, pero probablemente tiene algo que ver con la perspectiva de quienes eligen hacer películas sobre Jesús, que a menudo es una perspectiva evangélica conservadora. No me gusta todo el contenido del programa, pero hay muchas cosas que sí me gustan.

Los escritores de “Los Elegidos” se han tomado una licencia artística y nos ofrecen una ventana al mundo de Jesús y sus primeros seguidores. Puedo imaginar algo de este mundo como las luchas diarias del pueblo judío que vivía bajo el dominio de una fuerza ocupante. Los romanos exigían impuestos; y estos impuestos aplastaban sueños de una buena vida, en la mayoría de los casos. Los romanos degradaron al pueblo y lo trataron con desdén. En este contexto entra Jesús; y trae una respuesta al sufrimiento del pueblo pero no la respuesta que esperaban. Se esperaba que el Mesías derrocará a los romanos con poder militar. En cambio, Jesús los invita a ellos y a nosotros a una nueva forma de vida basada en los valores del reino de Dios. Jesús invita a todos a vivir a la luz del amor de Dios, que tal vez no cambie nuestras circunstancias materiales, como tener que pagar impuestos, pero la invitación de Jesús es de poner a Dios en primer lugar y vivir con amor por todo; esto hace todo y todos ser nuevos, diferentes. Jesús nos da una nueva perspectiva que puede cambiarlo todo.

Nos encontramos con Simón Pedro, Mateo, Andrés, Tomás, María Magdala, María la madre de Jesús y todos los que estuvieron cerca de Jesús. Cuando Jesús revela quién es y comienza a sanar y a decir palabras que nos son familiares, pero por primera vez, los que lo rodean, como lo muestra el programa, sienten temor y asombro, sorprendentemente. Sabemos que los amigos y seguidores de Jesús lucharon por entenderlo; y “The Chosen” se centra en eso. Los vemos

discutir entre ellos; se preguntan si realmente pueden dejar todo lo que han conocido y seguir a Jesús. Incluso aunque estando él allí en la carne, para animarlos y abrazarlos, todavía no es fácil ser elegido por Jesús.

Jesús les dice a ellos y a nosotros: “No me elegisteis. Yo te eliji.” Nos parecemos mucho a esos primeros seguidores que Jesús eligió. Luchamos; Nos distraemos con los valores del mundo. No siempre estamos de acuerdo sobre cómo seguir a Jesús. Podemos sentirnos asustados y confundidos. Conociendo todas nuestras luchas humanas y preocupaciones mundanas, Jesús se dirige a nosotros, como siempre lo hace con aquellos que ha elegido, y nos anima con su amor a seguir intentándolo y a tener paciencia para que todo se revele. Jesús nos confía su ministerio más de lo que nosotros confiamos en nosotros mismos.

A medida que avanzamos hacia el otoño y el año del programa, somos sabios cuando acudimos a Jesús en busca de guía y apoyo. Hacemos bien en acudir a Dios una y otra vez con esperanza y confianza mientras oramos por la gracia de ser el pueblo y la iglesia que Dios nos llama a ser. Bendiciones para ti en tu camino de fe. Afortunadamente, estamos en esto junto con Dios y todo estará bien. ¡Aleluya, aleluya, aleluya!

La paz sea con ustedes,

Hilary+



Health Brigade gets All Saints donations

By Bruce MacAlister, Editor

Health Brigade a few blocks from Holy Comforter, will receive your All Saints day donations not otherwise marked to purpose. When it started on Hanover Avenue it was the Fan Free Clinic, one of the few medical practices that would treat gays during the AIDS epidemic. See <https://www.healthbrigade.org/> to learn more about this full-service clinic.





Holy Comforter Completes Financial Review Process

By David Lehman, Treasurer

Holy Comforter recently went through a financial review process. This was done at the request of the Diocese as the diocesan canons require that an annual audit, or review, of church financial records be submitted to the Office of the Bishop. To fulfill this request we hired the services of CPA firm, Harris, Hardy & Johnstone, P.C. who completed an “Agreed Upon Procedures” or “AUP” review. This review is not meant to be a detailed audit, but is meant to review and assure our financial position. The main areas of the AUP review included Cash processes, status of Investments, Receivables processes, Accounts payable and expenses, Payroll and Payroll taxes. AUP reviews are completely acceptable to meet the Diocese’s financial review requirements.

Holy Comforter had this review done for the years of 2020, 2021 and 2022. These reviews were completed in August. There is good news in that the outcome of the reviews for each year was positive with no financial issues identified. In short, we received a clean review of our financial processes. We submitted these reviews to the Diocese and we are now fully caught up with our financial reporting requirements with them.



Holy Comforter Current Financial State Overview

By David Lehman, Treasurer

Back in March we as members of Holy Comforter adopted our 2023 Annual Budget at our Annual Meeting. The budget we adopted was a forward looking one that is in line with our vision of who we are as a church community. It also set a challenge for us to consider how through our giving we support our vision. The budget is intended to inspire us to give.

The budget set a giving target that we believe is realistic. The expense amount we choose is higher than our giving target which leaves us with the goal to inspire increased giving throughout the

year. Through the end of July our pledge giving has been right on target. Our expenses have been moderately lower than what is expected through July, although it was still was a cumulative deficit of \$19,000. This means we have some good news of where we stand with our budget at the end of July, yet a challenge remains for us.



We remain with a challenge of how to close the gap even further that we have between our giving and our expenses. Already this year there are parishioners who have generously given beyond their pledge amount. We look forward with gratitude for how each of us can help close the gap between our giving and expenses by the end of the year.

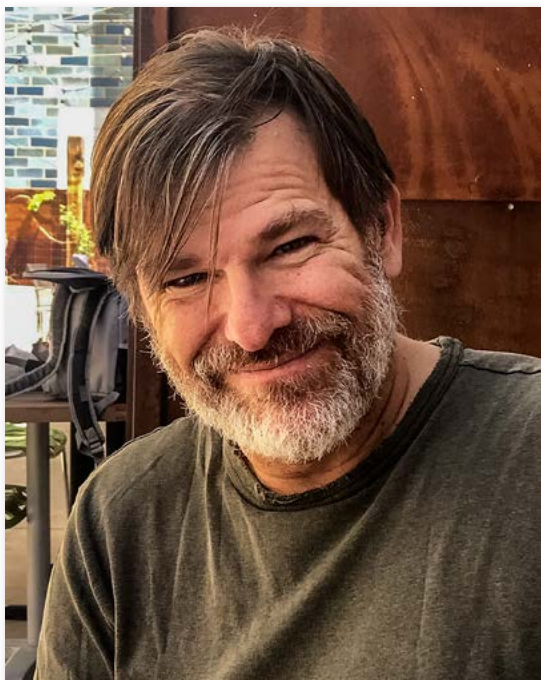


Lucius Chapin, Seminarian - an introduction

By Lucius Chapin

I was born and raised as a cradle Virginia Episcopalian growing up in the privilege that comes with volumes of family lore. Founding fathers, religious beacons, gifted musicians, skilled craftsmen, respected physicians, and fortunate businessmen are just some of the models from my family that my mother recounted as a path already laid out before me. I met the challenge well, living up to the expectation to hold up the high status of the family. Yet, insidiously I became aware that the path I walked felt as if it were not mine. It would take nearly 40 years of my life for the shell of an identity constructed with accomplishments and possessions to crumble

apart. The fifteen years since the existential crises of a shattered life have been a slow process of deliberate and vigilant examination and effort. I came to realize that I am not what I have done or what I do, much less what I have. Endeavoring to disrupt the misguided vestiges of an identity based on performance I came to ask, "What is my identity based on?" It has been a slow realization, and now seemingly obvious one, that identity is formed in relationships. I have come to aspire to disrupt and transform a tenuous performance-based identity into a relationship-based identity. More specifically, in relation with Christ, this becomes a Christ-based identity.



In my adolescence I had a revelatory experience that gave me more than a glimpse into a life in Christ. It was an all too transient experience of the presence of divine love as creation itself. I spent the years since in some way chasing that state, but all the while it remained inaccessible to me. I did occasionally have glimpses. It was not until I was brought to the point of utter desperation, in losing everything I valued in my life, that I became empty enough to be filled with something greater than my own limited self. It was in this brokenness that the abundance of God's grace could be fully revealed. I aspire to, though seldom truly approximate, this self-emptiness in approaching the scriptures.

For all my many years of education before seminary, I held education to be a process of gaining discrete and useful pieces of information. Learning was acquiring facts and ideas to be wielded in life to the betterment of oneself and others. In seminary I have come to understand learning in a very different way. Learning has become a relationship with facts and ideas rather than a possession of them, just as I have found my identity is formed in relation to the world rather than my possession of it. I now have a renewed relationship with scripture. No longer is the word of God something to be acquired and possessed and wielded, instead it is something to enter into relationship with. In this manner, engagement with scripture becomes personal and more importantly interpersonal.

In the months to come I look forward to deepening my relationship within the community here at Holy Comforter. Already it is abundantly clear to me the strength of relationships at work in this church. In order for you each to come to know me a little more I plan to share in the upcoming newsletters aspects of my life where the bonds and tensions of relationship have formed me as a Christian. These stories are deeply personal and I am sure you will find them interesting and hopefully informative to your own journeys as we join together in relationship with Christ and one another.



Hoco Birthdays
For the month of October:

Peggy Hombs, 2nd;
Cheryl Groce-Wright, 3rd; Phoebe Winter, 10th;
Kipley Herr, 13th; Thomas Munro, 19th;
Lit Maxwell, 24th; Emery Nelson, 30th



A Message from Side by Side

By Peggy L. Hombs

This April, after a long COVID break, HoCo volunteers resumed preparing and delivering a meal once a month for youth and



parents, who attend support group meetings at Side by Side (formerly known as ROSMY), an organization that Holy Comforter has supported for many, many years. Side by Side is dedicated to creating supportive communities

where Virginia’s LGBTQI+ youth can define themselves, belong, and flourish. We recently received this feedback:

“The meals were incredibly well received. If we could, we would give you 5/5 stars on Yelp! We have frozen vegetarian and gluten free meals in our freezer downstairs for folks who cannot eat the main meal but vegetarian food (like mac and cheese, pasta, what y'all have been doing) is always welcome.... cannot express the gratitude for your continuous generosity. The food has been awesome, and it truly feels like it brings us together....”

We gather at 4:00 pm on the 4th Thursday monthly to prepare the meal - sharing the HoCo kitchen with others preparing the meal for the Vets’ Shelter. If you are interested in joining us or preparing homemade dessert items (always popular with the youth!), please contact me.



HoCo Work Day Saturday October 14th

By Ron Cox

Your help is needed on Saturday, October 14th, from 8:30-12:00 to assist Creation Care in caring for our grounds. The main goal of the work day is to remove the weeds and prepare the soil on the Monument side of the church for planting in the Spring. Raking and



other clean up tasks need to be done as well. Please bring shovels, hoes and rakes. There will be gluten free treats, doughnuts, coffee and juice. Can't come for the entire morning? That's fine - stop by for an hour or two. Click Creation Care WorkDay at https://bit.ly/hoco_workday_23 to sign up. Thanks!



Climate Justice Advocate to speak during parish retreat

By Hilary Smith, Rector

I’m delighted that my cousin Elisa will be joining us on our parish retreat at Shrine Mont, Oct 20 to 22, 2023.

During a recent family reunion, Elisa talked with me about the importance of spirituality when addressing the climate crisis. She is interested in working with faith groups, so I invited her to join us for our Shrine Retreat. Here is her bio:

Elisa Soto-Danseco (she/her) is a climate justice researcher based in Brooklyn, New York. She graduated from The New School with a Masters of Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management. Her work principally explores climate and environmental justice in their decolonial, anticapitalist, and care-centric potentials.



Chamber Music Society of Central Virginia presents

By Jim Bennett, Director of Church Music

Germany had the Bach family. But France had the Couperins, one of the most prolific musical families in history. The Chamber Music Society of Central



Virginia presents harpsichordist Carsten Schmidt who brings his golden harpsichord to CMSCVA for an intimate afternoon of fabulous Baroque music by Louis, François and Armand-Louis Couperin, the musical kings of France.

Date: Sunday, October 29, 4:00pm

Discounted tickets are available to the HOCO community - \$10 adults, and free for students. To access this discount:



1. Visit our event page (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/622785918447?aff=oddtcreator>).
2. Click "Get Tickets," enter the promo code "HOCO" and click apply. Your discount should now be applied.



Monday evening class begins new courses on zoom

By Peggy Hombs

The Monday Evening Adult Class resumed on Monday, September 11th, from 7:00-8:00 pm via Zoom. (The Zoom link is found on the Holy Comforter website homepage.)

The class began a new curriculum *The Gospel of Mark: A Beginner's Guide to the Good News* by Dr. Amy-Jill ("AJ") Levine. In this 6-part DVD-based course, "AJ" focuses on the earliest Gospel, examining John the Baptizer, the Little Apocalypse, the Transfiguration, and several of Jesus' stories and parables. She is a Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace and University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies Emerita at Vanderbilt University. She is co-editor of the *Jewish Annotated New Testament*. She is the first Jew to teach New

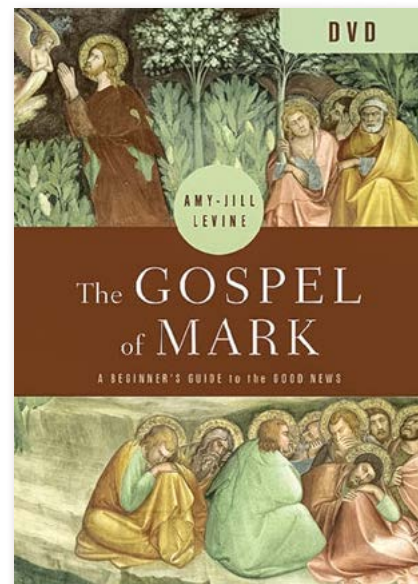
Testament at Rome's Pontifical Biblical Institute.

Class participants receive a weekly email with optional read-ahead material; on Monday the class views a 30-minute video, followed by a wide-ranging discussion.

Because this course is only six sessions long, in mid-October the class will begin a second course *The Fall of the Pagans and the Origins of Medieval Christianity*. The lecturer for this 24-session course is Kenneth W. Harl, Professor of Classical and Byzantine History, at Tulane University.

This course will explore the reasons for the clash between the pagans and the early Christians that ended in the Christianization of the Roman world between the 4th and 6th centuries and dictating the course of Western Civilization thereafter.

All are welcome: join us anytime to 'taste and see'!! Contact me for any questions.



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS



**Our Pets are a Blessing to Us...
Join Us in Blessing Them**

We will be celebrating our animals on Sunday, October 1 during our 10:00 am service. Bring your animals to church and let the dogs sing! On Saturday, October 7, our rector will also be blessing animals at Toby Town, Doggie Day Care and Staycare, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm during their Fall festival, 2100 Maywill St.



Landscaping the entrance

Interview of Bill Smith, by Bruce MacAlister, Editor

Every Sunday morning for weeks the Staples Mill entrance to Holy Comforter has changed from nice, but way overgrown to sparse dirt to some planting but with old electrical conduit sticking out. All of this was the work of parishioner Bill Smith with funding from the Holy Comforter Foundation*. Bill is a very experienced gardener who has designed and installed some of the parish landscaping.

At their February meeting, the Foundation trustees discussed what they could do to help enhance the church. They noted that much of the plantings near the Staples Mill entrance were overgrown. Bill responded that the best way to improve the look was to pull it all up and plant anew, to get what we want. “I went back to the Foundation with a design and a plan. I



got gardeners Bridget Keith and Nancy Dean to review the plan and suggest changes. A landscape

design architect friend also reviewed the design and suggested some changes,” he said. The Foundation also thought the church needed better entrance lighting for safety and comfort so that was included. The Foundation agreed to fund the landscaping and lighting.

Bill said “We ripped out the overgrown plants. That included digging out 20 root-balls! Then we loaded the soil with nutrients. I wanted the



underlying soil to be rich, so that delayed the plantings. We planted a weeping cherry tree that stands tall and is an early bloomer. We planted lots of pollinators, native plants, Yaupon Hollies (*Ilex vomitoria*), and ‘Radiance’ Abelia that gives color all year. We planted new generation boxwood that is blight resistant. We added a number of pollinators, cone flowers that are



blooming now, Hydrangeas that tend to bloom all summer, Coreopsis, Catmint, Betony, Butterfly Weed, Hummingbird Mint, and Nandina “Gulf



Stream” (not the invasive bamboo sort) with a red fall color. These are all perennials. For some elevation and color we used the two urns flanking the entrance that we planted with Lantana. We designed for shorter plants so it would be easier to maintain. I like beds to have pop to them with varied colors and shapes. There are a few things left to do in the next month or two.”

He added “To let the root systems get established there will be little or no pruning the rest of this year so it could look a little ragged. We’ll prune next year at the appropriate time.”

Bill said that they still need to review the plantings under the bell tower, and the Parrish Hall entrance on Staples Mill. He will also examine the Monumental entrance to the parish house to see what would be good, and then see if the Foundation would be interested in funding changes there.

For lighting, the electricians said the existing poles were in poor shape. They suggested a common height and Bill specified 7 feet. Unlike the old lights on timers, these have automatic dusk to dawn controls. One evening Art (Raymond) and Bill were checking the lights when several neighbors came by. They were pleased with the brightness, and said it makes them feel safer.

** The Holy Comforter Foundation is a 501(c)3 religious non-profit founded in 1983 that takes financial gifts from the church members, invests them, and distributes them for major church improvement projects. Separate from the Vestry, the Foundation is governed by five trustees directly elected by the members at an annual meeting. Trustees must be former Vestry members and thus experienced in the internal operation of the church. A trustee serves a three year term and, unlike a Vestry member, can be reelected and serve up to three terms.*



Pastor - Why I left the church

By Joella Rhoades

A recent article caught my eye. It’s written by a Presbyterian minister and it’s both insightful and interesting.

The Rev. Alexander Lang writes about the pressures on a pastor and how exhausting he found it after 10 years. On the topic “The Great Pastor Resignation” he covers the statistics. He then describes all the roles he was expected to fill and the expectations members of the parish had of his fulfilling those roles.

It’s from a site called Restorative Faith which I read frequently. Click <http://www.restorativefaith.org/post/departure-why-I-left-the-church> to read the article.





We will hold a “Trunk or Treat” for our children and our neighborhood children on Sunday, October 29, from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. You are invited to dress up in a costume that Sunday! Let’s have fun! The idea of “trunk or treat” is that children come to our car trunks and we give out candy. In case of rain, we could be inside.



Men at the Movies - Ship of Fools

By Steven C. Van Voorhees

Last month, in our movie, Russians sailed into a Massachusetts island harbor as uninvited tourists during the Cold War in the 1960s. This month we have a German cruise ship packed with over 600 displaced sugar cane workers and La Condesa headed for a jail cell in Fascist Spain in 1933. This is *Ship of Fools*, based on a best-selling, prize winner of a book by Katherine Anne Porter. The movie date is **Tuesday evening, October 10, 2023.**

The term, “ship of fools,” has a long cultural history beginning with Plato’s Republic. The ship in this setting is a democratic system in which everyone is equal, no one is steering, and it is full of fools who have no knowledge of what should

be done. The ship is the city/state. From the 4th century on, we see that this concept remains and reappears in 1494 in the form of a book written in German by Sebastian Brant in Basel, Switzerland. Brant’s book is a huge book with the weight of a bible in vernacular language, and a literary highpoint between Chaucer and Spenser. It was a best seller and, like Plato’s book, has remained in the tradition for the last 600 years.



This book length poem has many kinds of fools on board and is laced with woodcut illustrations.

Porter’s book has two themes: a ship of fools heading for a paradise of fools, the 20th century world heading to Nazism in Germany, fascism in Japan and Spain, and World War II, and the people on board looking for utopia without realizing what to do in a world of prejudices, racism and evil. Which now brings us to the movie. It’s loaded with Fools! The ship sailed from Vera Cruz, stopped in Havana and picked up 600 deported migrant workers and that Spanish countess. We meet a collection of fools, mostly from Europe with a sprinkling of Americans. Two times, one



character
“breaks the
fourth wall”
and speaks
to us directly
at the
beginning
and at the
end. I’m
hoping we

will talk about what he says and the cinematic device of breaking through the fourth wall.

Unlike the popular movies made for 18 to 49 year-old males today and the constant release of action flicks, this story made in 1965 is like a sea cruise. There is not much action but there a lots of stories to see and hear. They include an aging femme fatale, a washed up professional baseball player, a dying ship’s doctor, a flamenco troupe, German Nazi sympathizers, German Jews, ladies of pleasure, that condemned Spanish countess, and the dwarf Glocken.

The movie was nominated for eight academy awards and won two. The Director said that it was about Hitler, even though he was not mentioned by name. IMDb gives it a 7.1/10 rating; Rotten Tomatoes 61%, and Google users 78% likes. This is a Robert Altman-esque movie with no real heroes or protagonists. There are several good stories here, including mismatched lovers, men pimping out women, a drug addict or two, and several social outcasts. Vivian Leigh gives her final performance, which captures our attention.

And, be tuned in to the dialogue for the bon mots, and prophetic observances that come our way. Lee Marvin plays a role made for him, and we see Jose Ferrer convince us in a very disturbing role as a Nazi sympathizer. And, Oscar Werner, as the ship’s doctor, Dr. Schumann, who cares for La Condesa, won several awards for his performance. Human decency and depravity are on equal display. Another question for us watching this picture is, “Is this film also prophetic about our human tendency to spoil the Eden we are given by our Creator?”

A final note—I’m giving this space to Plato, who observed:

“Wise men speak because they have something to say;

“Fools because they have to say something.”

As usual, we will gather in the Parlor at 6:00pm for fellowship; the movie will roll at 6:30; discussion as it occurs. Bring a friend, bring something to eat or drink!



October Book Club - The Wonder

By Stephanie Turner

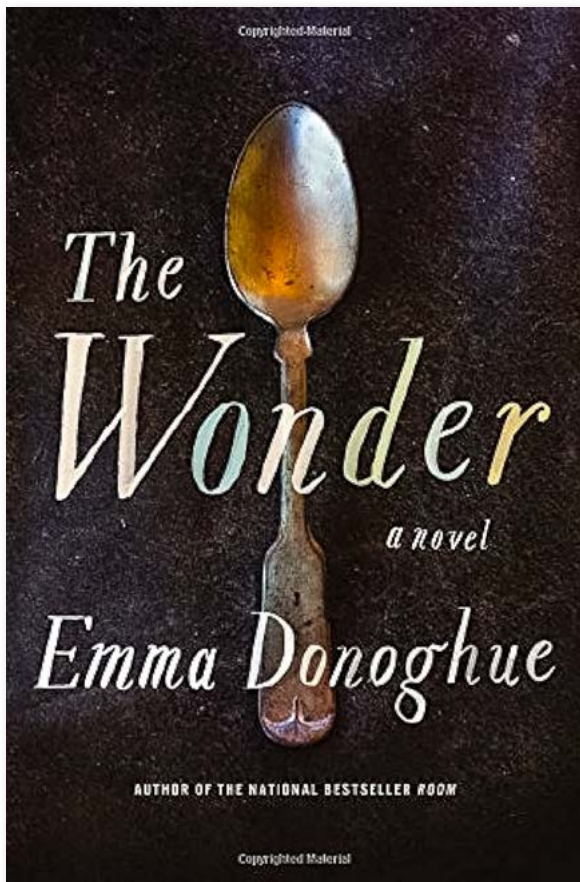
Our selection for October is *The Wonder* by Emma Donoghue. The following detailed review from *The Guardian* gives us wonderful background for this amazing book.

“*Guardian* UK, September 26, 2016

“Miracle, fraud or medical anomaly? A gripping investigation into an Irish girl's fasting by the writer of *Room*.

“Emma Donoghue will probably always be best known for her 2010 bestseller *Room*, a child's-eye view of confinement and escape prompted by the horrific Josef Fritzl case in Austria, which she adapted for the screen last year. More commonly, though, she reaches further back into the historical archive for inspiration, breathing imaginative life into biographical footnotes - a 19th-century American murder in *Frog Music*, a scandalous Victorian British divorce in *The Sealed Letter* - to create novels and short stories that are refreshingly revisionist about class, gender and sexuality.

“Her new book is based on the many cases of ‘fasting girls’ reported across the world from the 16th to the 20th centuries: women and girls, often prepubescent, who claimed to live without food for months or even years. Whether it was anorexia, religious mania or entrepreneurial spirit



that was driving them, they drew donations from curious visitors and fascination from doctors, scientists and priests, keen to discover if they could really be living on air, light or the love of

God. (The phenomenon divides along gender lines: while women withdrew into bedrooms that became shrines, their male equivalents, the ‘hunger artists’ immortalised in Kafka's story, presented starvation as a performative feat of endurance in traveling fairs, a trend culminating in illusionist David Blaine's 44-day fast in a glass box dangled over the Thames.)

“Several of the fasting girls were placed under medical surveillance, with predictable results - which is where Donoghue comes in. Lib Wright is an English nurse who has served in the Crimea under the redoubtable ‘Miss N’, and now takes on a well paid but perplexing commission in an Irish backwater: to watch for a fortnight over 11-year-old Anna O'Donnell, who apparently has not eaten for four months, and thus reveal whether she is a miracle or a fraud. Lib is briskly impatient with the heady mixture of religiosity and folklore permeating the village like peat smoke, and at first with the obliging yet resistant Anna herself. She notes Anna's symptoms - downy cheeks, scaly skin, blue fingertips, swollen lower limbs - checks over the tumbledown cabin for caches of food, limits Anna's contact with her parents to a brief embrace morning and evening, and expects that she will have the mystery solved in short order.



But as the days pass, no secret feeding is discovered. Anna's condition worsens and Lib begins to wonder: ‘Could the Watch be having the perverse effect of turning the O'Donnells' lie to truth?’

“Donoghue draws out the narrative suspense with her customary combination

of historical verve and emotional delicacy, as the mystery becomes not so much what is happening beneath Lib's nose, but why. 'Every body was a repository of secrets,' Lib muses, as she starts to look beyond her desire to expose trickery towards a truth that can be expressed only through suffering, not words. Faith, or what Lib calls 'religious mumbo-jumbo', can trump reason. Anna is mourning a dead brother, obsessively totting up how many prayers will get him into



heaven, and the dark days of the famine still hang over the village. 'A child now 11 must have been born into hunger. Weaned on it, reared on it ... every thrifty inch of Anna's body had learned to make do with less.' Caught at the nexus of family

secrets, religious hysteria and medical hypothesis, with one doctor idly wondering if her chilled extremities are a sign that she is changing into 'more of a reptilian than a mammalian nature', Anna has only one power available to her: the anorexic's power of refusal.

"Like *Room*, this is a thrilling domestic psychodrama that draws its power from quotidian detail as well as gothic horror, as a woman and a child at close quarters must draw on inner resources to survive an impossible situation. But Donoghue also sets Anna and Lib's relationship in a wider context: of English and Irish antagonism, of the birth of nursing, of the clash between science and faith. By the end of the book, the fiercely atheist Lib has adopted Anna's religious cadences, presenting herself as both tempter and priest. Should Anna break her fast, it will be a new kind of sacrament, an admission of the body and 'such need, such desire, risk and regret, all the unhallowed mess of life'."

- Justine Jordan, Copyright, Guardian Newspapers Limited



Episcopalians march to 'End Fossil Fuels'

By Shireen Korkzan

From the Office of Public Affairs

Episcopal News Service - Episcopalians joined some 75,000 people who participated in the March to End Fossil Fuels Sept. 17 in New York.

The march took place three days before delegates are scheduled to convene at the U.N. headquarters Sept. 20 for a climate action summit. The summit's goal is to push countries "to accelerate action by governments, business, finance, local authorities and civil society."

A coalition of local and national organizations, including GreenFaith, planned the march, which featured speeches from politicians and celebrities. Protestors focused intently on the fossil fuel industry for the first time, according to news reports. The march wasn't an official event observed by The Episcopal Church, but according to Phoebe Chatfield, program associate for creation care and justice, Episcopalians from more than 21 different congregations and over seven dioceses attended the march.



Episcopalians participated in the March to End Fossil Fuels on Sept. 17, 2023, in New York. Photo: Phoebe Chatfield

"There's no higher duty than to be stewards of Earth," said the Rev. Matthew Moore, the Diocese of Long Island's missionary for environmental justice. "Our journey of spirituality is a journey of reconciliation, and part of that reconciliation needs to happen with our relationship with the planet."

U.N Secretary-General António Guterres called for this week's climate action summit in 2022,

setting countries' participation requirement at having a concrete plan to phase out fossil fuels. It's a requirement that rules out U.S. participation, the Rev. Fletcher Harper, executive director of GreenFaith, an international, community-led climate and environmental organization based in New York, told ENS.

"The United States does not have anything approaching that kind of plan ... and that's utterly unacceptable, from any kind of spiritual, ethical, moral perspective you want to take," he said.

The United States is making a slow transition to renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar energies. Fossil fuels still dominate energy production. In 2022, fossil fuels - coal, natural gas and petroleum - accounted for 81% of the United States' energy production, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

When nonrenewable fossil fuels are burned, they emit large amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses into the air and water. Those emissions heat the Earth, and pollution byproducts pose a health hazard to humans and wildlife.

While fossil fuels continue to be used worldwide, human-induced climate change is exacerbating the number and severity of natural disasters. In September 2023, heavy rains caused by Storm Daniel in the Mediterranean caused two dams in Libya to collapse, killing thousands of people; two months prior, days of heavy rainfall flooded communities in Vermont. Conversely, an unprecedented series of deadly wildfires broke out in Hawai'i in August, and wildfires have been burning across Canada since March.

Transitioning to clean energy reduces greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental pollutants that impact humans and wildlife. In July 2022, General Convention committed The Episcopal Church to carbon neutrality in all its facilities and operations by 2030. Some parishes have already met that goal.

Episcopalians joined some 75,000 people who participated in the March to End Fossil Fuels Sept. 17, 2023, in New York. Photo: Phoebe Chatfield

Allegra Lovejoy, ministry assistant for the

Episcopal Diocese of Long Island, told ENS that the March to End Fossil Fuels occurred during "such a critical time for our planet." Lovejoy led the diocese's organizing team for the march.

"So many of our Episcopal churches are facing social justice challenges, economic challenges, etc., that we're facing, but [human-induced climate change] affects everyone, and this affects our future and future generations," she said. "As a community, we have all the intelligence, all the technology and all the money to completely change what we're doing to the climate."



Episcopalians joined some 75,000 people who participated in the March to End Fossil Fuels Sept. 17, 2023, in New York. Photo: Phoebe Chatfield

On Sept. 20, The Episcopal Church and 11 other faith organizations will host "Taking Stock of our Ambition: Faith-based Climate Action at the United Nations" at the Episcopal Church Center in New York to introduce the "global stocktake" and other U.N. processes for climate action. The event will run concurrently with the U.N.'s climate action summit. The event is open to the public, and participants can choose to attend either in person or via Zoom.

Episcopalians' environmental advocacy is ongoing. The church plans to launch its Love God, Love God's World film-based creation care curriculum in October. The curriculum will be a story-driven tool designed to help Episcopalians learn about creation care.

The curriculum will include nine sessions and is intended for adults. More information can be found on the Love God, Love God's World website.

Meanwhile, Christians around the world,

including Episcopalians, are currently observing the ecumenical Season of Creation, a time of engaging in dialogue, prayer and action to protect Earth's natural resources. The Season of Creation started on Sept. 1 - the World Day of Prayer - and will conclude on Oct. 4, the feast day of St. Francis, the patron saint of ecology.

"This is a moment when faith communities have to decide it is not enough for our churches to go solar - or to reduce your automobile travel and your air travel, and to use renewable energy to power your home wherever possible," Harper said. "It's good that they do, but we need society and the world to go solar, and that requires a social movement."

Episcopalians can learn more about the church's commitment to addressing the global climate crisis on the Covenant for the Care of Creation's website.

- *Shireen Korkzan is a reporter and assistant editor for Episcopal News Service. She can be reached at skorkzan@episcopalchurch.org.*

occupancy, \$224.00; Children age 4 - 12, \$110.00; Children infant to 4 years old, no cost to attend. We do not want the cost to keep anyone away who wants to attend; scholarships are available. Register here <https://tinyurl.com/ecv9sv8t>.



Parish Retreat - a few spaces are still available

By the Rev Dr Hilary Smith

Parish Retreat; there are a few spaces still available. Join us for fun and time together on the mountain! Our Diocesan retreat center, Shrine Mont, is located in Orkney Springs VA. The



this program year will focus on creation! Let's learn and talk about Creation Care, Eco Justice, and Spirituality around our love of our earth and all its creatures. As well as time together, there will be many chances for personal time. The cost includes all meals and activities, such as hiking, walking the labyrinth, and all that we will do together. Adults, double occupancy, \$172.00 each; Adults single



Church of the Holy Comforter, Richmond

a parish in the Diocese of Virginia under the Episcopal Church in the USA

which is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion

Monument Avenue at Staples Mill Road

web - www.hoco.org; e-mail - office@hoco.org;

phone 804-355-3251; fax 804-355-0049

[Hoco web site calendar page](#)

Schedule of church events following the Covid-19 period (still evolving)

• **Sundays:**

- ◇ 8:45am Adult class in the Parlor
- ◇ 9:00am Sunday Morning, Choir practice in the choir room
- ◇ 10:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II, in person with nursery available; the service is live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube and posted following the service

• **Mondays:**

- ◇ **7:00pm Adult class, Zoom**

• **Wednesdays:**

- ◇ 11:30am Centering Prayer, in person in the in the church
- ◇ Noon Holy Communion, in person in the church

• **Thursdays:**

- ◇ 4:00pm Lectionary Study, Zoom
- ◇ 7:00-8:15pm Weekly choir rehearsal

Food Pantry Hours:

- ◇ First and third Saturdays, 11:00am to noon
- ◇ First and third Tuesdays, 5:30 to 6:30pm

Veterans Shelter Dinner:

- ◇ Fourth Thursdays, prep in HoCo kitchen, 5:00pm, delivery to the shelter, 5:45pm

Side by Side Dinner:

- ◇ Fourth Thursdays, prep in HoCo kitchen, 4:00pm, deliver to Side by Side, 5:15pm

Editing of the Messenger is done by Bruce MacAlister, the layout by George Collier.

The November Messenger will be available Sunday November 5th. The deadline for article submissions is Friday October 27th. We really like to have your articles before the deadline!

If you feel that you have something you'd like to contribute, please contact Bruce MacAlister at editor@hoco.org

