

ST ELIZABETH'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Rt. Rev. Scott B. Hayashi, 11th Bishop of Utah

The Rev. Michael Carney, Vicar

SUNDAY WORSHIP, HOLY EUCHARIST 10:00 AM



Art Empowers Summer Camp



It was such a long time since Art Empowers had been together. In March, 2020, our Spring Series had been cut short by the pandemic, and we'd all been missing each other. As we discovered at Summer Camp, the kids also missed the program: creative art projects, spending time with friends, outdoor fun and games, caring adults and healthy meals.

"We could see it in their faces," one of the leaders said. "They were delighted to be together, having so much fun!" Kids returning to the program showed the new ones how our Talking

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Circles work, and they were all engrossed in the art activities. “Experts” would tell you that today’s kids have short attention spans, but they haven’t seen our group. It’s common for them to stay focused on the projects for forty-five minutes or more, and even when the playground beckoned, most of them kept working. Making bracelets, collage, painting, modeling with clay—they loved it all.

With our beloved leader SueAnn Cottonuts recovering from surgery, Becca Gardner did a great job of taking on leadership, ably assisted by Sadie Santio and Angelica Quinn with the kids and Ashaya Cesspooch cooking. Jeromy Groves and Mary Beth from Ute Tribe Transit gave us a huge boost by providing transportation, and we’re grateful to the local businesses and nonprofits who support Art Empowers financially. For St. Elizabeth’s, this is our most important outreach to the community.

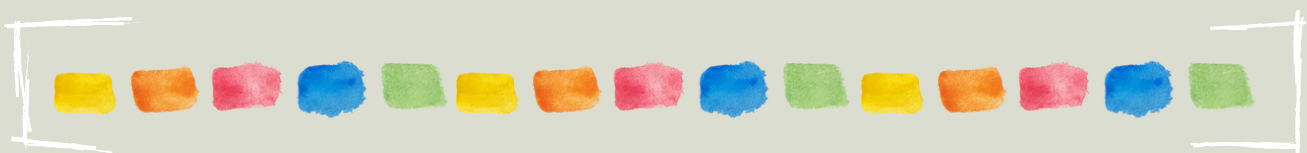
The Teen Camp two weeks later was smaller in numbers but just as much fun. Becca appreciated their exceptional level of focus and had to begin planning more than one art activity each day. Even when game time began, they often preferred



to stay at the tables, sitting together as they worked on their own projects. Thanks again to Transit for an outing to Big Springs on Friday, a wonderful way to cap off the week.

We’re eager to continue our after-school programs, but it’s hard to know what’s coming next with the pandemic. We’ll wait to see what the schools do this fall, and hopefully we’ll be offering a six-week series. Look for our Facebook announcements on Northern Ute / Word Around the Rez and for flyers in the Ute Bulletin. Summer Camp was great fun, and we look forward to whatever is coming next!

More photos on pages 7 & 8



Leo Tapoof's Teaching on Prayer

"Praying is important," Leo told me on a recent visit. "You've got to keep praying. That's what I do when I'm alone; I pray all the time. I pray for you, I pray for the church. I do that and look what happens: you come here!"

Taking communion to a person who can't come to church is always satisfying, but Leo makes it extra-special. I always feel like he's giving me more than I could ever offer him. Don't forget that lay people can do this just as well as I can—speak with me if you might be interested. We could go together and you'd get an idea of how it works.

Leo is living at a care center in Vernal now, which makes visiting much easier. If you'd like to send him a card, let me know and I'll get you the address. You might discover that he's been praying for you!

Michael



Speaking of Prayers...

Our little congregation suffered quite a number of painful losses in July: Forrest Cuch's sister Mari, Ginger and Francis Poowegup's brother Albert, and Ginny Chimburas' son (and Adam's brother) Silas. May they rest in peace and rise in glory! And may we continue to take good care of each other, because for those most closely involved, the grief sticks around for a while. If you're far away and would like to send a card, contact Michael at whiterocksrev@gmail.com or 435-823-1559 for the mailing addresses.

During the past twelve months, we've passed through the darkest days of the pandemic: concerned about how bad things will get, learning ways to stay safe, grieving losses, wondering when vaccines would become available and how well they would work. Through the summer of 2020, COVID-19 counts in the Uintah Basin remained low, but they took off in October and stayed high through the winter. At St. Elizabeth's, in-person worship was suspended from late October until Easter, and other parish and community activities came to a halt. This crisis forced us to confront a basic question about our identity: Who are we as church when we can't gather together?

Looking Back on the Pandemic Year

We're deeply grateful to the Diocese of Utah for continuing our generous grant funding as we've struggled with the challenges of the pandemic. It's helpful to look back on the year that's passed to see how we've lived into being church under these extreme circumstances. By the grace of God, we seem to have maintained (or even strengthened) our spiritual foundation. To guide these reflections, we'd like to use the five questions in the Baptismal Covenant about living the Christian life. (*Book of Common Prayer* p. 304-5)

1

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers?

Response: "I will, with God's help."

In the past, this question evoked images of Sunday worship, which has always been at the heart of congregational life. Because that had to change, I (Michael, the Vicar) followed a new practice of mailing out a weekly message and prayer service, which people could read at home (including elders who aren't comfortable with online worship). I also recorded a service containing those elements on Facebook Live every Sunday morning, which could be viewed at any time. Those communications have continued as we've started gathering again, expanding our reach and including more people than before the pandemic.

With that foundation in place, maintaining the quality of relationships in the congregation was our central concern. I spent many hours on the phone last winter, especially with our elders, and those conversations were always welcome. The Bishop's Committee met monthly by telephone conference call, checking in and praying together, staying connected while keeping up with our business. Organized phone trees lasted only for a while, giving way to the community's informal networks. The Annual Meeting, also conducted by telephone, turned into a delightful "reunion" of isolated elders. Our bi-monthly newsletter assumed even greater importance, not only sharing our stories but presenting a series of spiritual writings by Bishop's Warden Forrest Cuch.



Financial giving stayed strong and met our budget goals, assisted by gifts from newsletter readers near and far. A donor from North Carolina suggested that, in lieu of our annual Holiday Meal for the community, we give pies to the families in Art Empowers, our expressive arts program for local children and youth. Our team of Lunch Makers reprised their popular outreach program (which had finished when the young people returned to school), delighting the recipients of their unexpected holiday pies.

More than half our budget is spent on my salary and benefits. While a priest has many responsibilities: leading worship, keeping people connected, providing pastoral care and focusing on mission, the real test is not what I do, but how the congregation responds through their ministries. The following stories illustrate how some of our members and leaders live out their faith, in light of the Baptismal Covenant.

2

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

Response: "I will, with God's help."

Adam Twiss is very familiar with the road to recovery. He said recently that, in his long struggle with substance abuse, "every attempt to quit and every treatment program made a difference in the end." For him, repenting means far more than wanting to make a change—it's a long, slow process of growing healthier personally and in his relationships. His faith has been critical to that growth, from letters exchanged from prison to being nourished by online services to long phone conversations sharing Scripture and prayer. Entering school at Uintah Basin Tech and winning a statewide prize for his remarkable welding sculpture were turning points, as was working as a Case Manager in the tribal outpatient recovery program. Christ's promise of new life is clearly at work with Adam, and he's giving back as a member of our Bishop's Committee, by attending Winter Talk (the national Indigenous Ministries conference) and by leading music whenever he can get to Whiterocks. It's clear that he does all this "with God's help."



3

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

Response: "I will, with God's help."

Forrest Cuch grew comfortable with public speaking during his years as a tribal executive and as Utah's Director of Indian Affairs. After retiring, he's focused his energies on his ranch, our church and environmental causes, and ironically, in the age of Zoom he's less isolated than ever before.

Along with retired Bishop Steven Charleston (author of the remarkable book *The Four Vision Quests of Jesus*), Forrest unites traditional Native wisdom with Christian theology. For example, he connects the suffering of Jesus depicted in the Stations of the Cross with the sacrificial offerings of Ute Sun Dancers. Over the past year he's spoken with numerous congregations, nonprofit groups and universities, advancing the work of racial reconciliation by teaching about the Doctrine of Discovery, intergenerational trauma, and the critical importance of caring for God's creation. "I've always known the Lord was with me, watching over me," he said, "and for that I'm thankful."



4

**Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons,
loving your neighbor as yourself?**

Response: "I will, with God's help."

SueAnn Cottonuts has always been a role model for the community, an icon of serving others. From her longtime ministry as a Head Start teacher to her devotion to the church to being a neighborhood organizer to raising her granddaughters, people have always counted on SueAnn. We couldn't imagine Art Empowers without her leadership. However, when she was struck by



COVID-19, her pre-existing conditions flared up in the scariest possible way. After being released from the hospital prematurely and suffering a potentially deadly relapse, she spent six weeks in the ICU in Murray, waiting to be strong enough for heart surgery. Every step along this perilous journey led to a round of phone calls among our elders, who poured their hearts into praying for SueAnn. I celebrated the two-week anniversary of my second vaccination by visiting her in person, and a series of

remarkable conversations ensued. “I don’t have a care in the world,” she said just before her surgery. “I know I’m in God’s hands.” Now that SueAnn is on her road to recovery, she’s grateful for the small blessings of regaining her appetite and energy, and she credits the virus with making the doctors aware of her heart problems. “Since God has given me more time,” she said, “I wonder what my next calling will be.” We know she’ll be praying for clarity and responding faithfully.

5

**Will you strive for justice and peace among all people,
and respect the dignity of every human being?**

Response: “I will, with God’s help.”

When I arrived at St. Elizabeth’s, the elders made it clear that serving the community’s young people is our number one priority. Substance abuse and intergenerational trauma are widespread, devastating many families, and we yearn to help the young ones make good starts in their lives. The Tribal Council (Business Committee) affirmed that focus in expressing appreciation for our Art Empowers (formerly Arts-Kids) program. The long hiatus in our programming required by the pandemic made us all anxious about starting again, but our recent summer camps worked out very well. Between the kids’ and teens’ camps, forty young people participated, and everyone had a great time. headed by Becca Gardner, our team of adult leaders bonded with lots of new kids, and as always, the art activities and outdoor games were very popular. We regard this program as our most significant response to the destructive impacts of European colonization on the local community. Providing transportation is still a tricky question, but we’ll follow the lead of the schools in finding the safest way to continue this essential ministry.

Michael



JULY/AUGUST 2021



St. Elizabeth's Mission

Noochu (the people) of St. Elizabeth's welcome you to worship, share hospitality and grow in God's love to better serve the church and community.



St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church occupies and operates upon the ancestral and traditional lands of the Ute Indian Tribe.

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