

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



Aveah and Caley were busy during the sermon—they know it takes a village!

Doing Business God's Way

Every month when our Bishop's Committee sits down to meet we have a full agenda, but we always begin with a prayer. And before we get started on the day's business, we take a few minutes to reflect on how the Spirit is at work among us.

Sometimes those reflections are the best part of our meetings, like this one: "Our programs help young people express themselves and be heard. The younger members of the B.C. inspire their elders and take responsibility." How often are young people listened to that seriously in today's world?

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Left: Young people serving food at last fall's Holiday Meal. Right: Youth Council members Cliftene Duncan, Nehemiah and Maria Alanis

There are good reasons why that happens here. In the last newsletter you read insightful reflections from the four teenagers who attended the Native Youth Event. Three of them have now volunteered to work with Becca Gardner to plan and lead the Youth Group meetings, and she thinks they may create their own Youth Retreat next year. They're learning to be leaders, which the church and our communities need so badly.

Here's another comment from a B.C. member: "St. Elizabeth's reminds the people around us that our country has become selfish, greedy and disconnected from nature." Our values and actions show that the world doesn't have to be this way. In a few weeks we'll be putting on another home-cooked Holiday Meal for the community. Everyone is invited and no one has to bring anything—we'll be giving back from all the blessings we receive.

At our last meeting the Bishop's Committee gave thanks for other expressions of the Spirit: or the possibility of having a

Women's Retreat next spring. For the health of our church in the midst of so many broken organizations. For the new music we're trying out on Sunday mornings. For working out our differences with Arts-Kids, Inc. and seeing new possibilities for our programs in the future. All of that happened in the first fifteen minutes, before we even "got down to business." It's great that remembering our blessings and noticing the Spirit at work are top priorities for our leaders.

Michael

An Amazing Journey!

The phone call from Monica Daly, our Bishop's assistant, was a complete surprise. "There's an Episcopal priest walking across the country raising money for children. He's going to be in your area in a couple of weeks—could you host him for a weekend?" Of course I said yes, before finding out that the priest on this amazing journey was a friend of mine from Colorado. Rev. Peter Munson set out early last spring in Charleston, South Carolina, and by the first week of September he'd walked all the way to Roosevelt!

It was a joy to see him again and Peter preached a wonderful sermon, sharing the call to do this he'd received ten years ago and the year-long process of preparing for the trip. "It turned out to be much bigger than I could have imagined," he said. "More difficult and more wonderful all at the same time."

We were blessed to join with the hundreds of

people all along his route who've helped Peter in small and large ways. Peter told us about the four children's organizations he's gathering donations for, which fit right in with our Outreach plans. During the summer Aveah and Caley Poowegup raised \$124 in coins, which they were happy to donate and which our Bishop's Committee matched. Then the members of our congregation matched that whole amount once again, so that we were able to give generously to support Peter's efforts.

He's in our hearts and prayers as his journey continues. This month he's walking across Highway 50 in Nevada ("The Loneliest Highway in America"), after which he'll be climbing over the Sierra Nevada mountains and heading for San Francisco. Thank you, Peter, for inspiring us with what's possible when we listen to the Spirit's call and connect with a community of supporters.



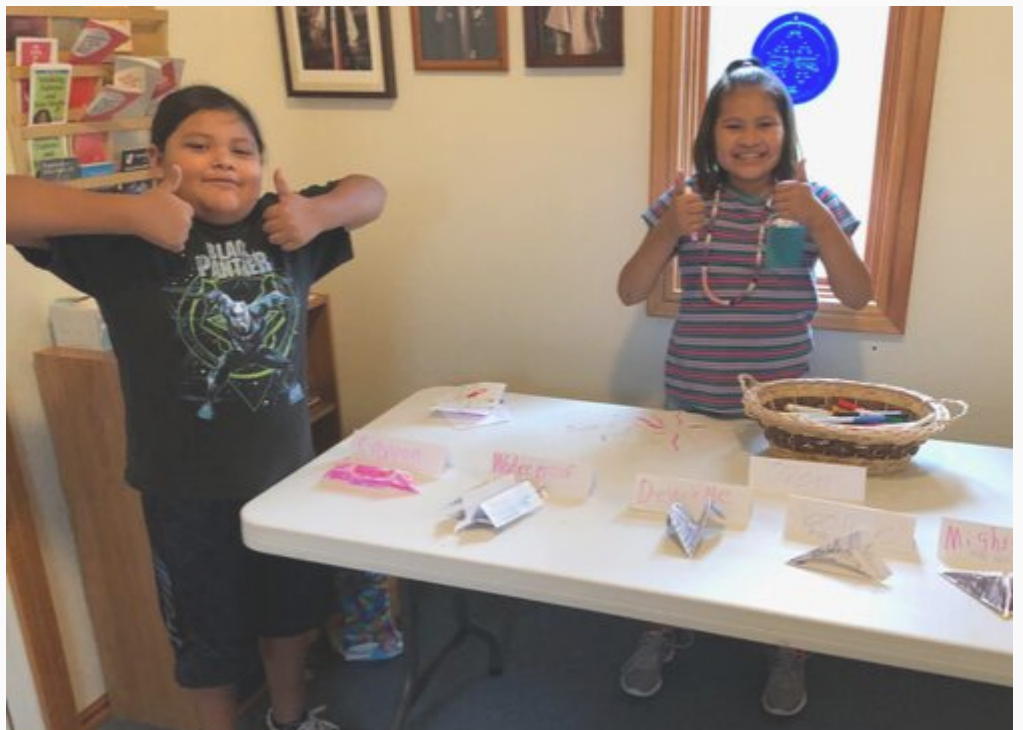
Photo Gallery



Michael joined 200 other people in a Walk to Prevent Suicide in Vernal. Remember: "Talk Saves Lives"



*Bishop Hayashi will be visiting
St. Elizabeth's on
Sunday, October 13 at 10:00 am*



*Kids express their creativity during the Sunday sermons, as with
Aveah and Caley's Airport*

Photo Gallery



We're thankful to the Diocese of Utah for helping us redo the steps and sidewalk in front of the sanctuary!



A Sacred Trust

I've been hearing voices this week, and they've been haunting me.

Did you hear climate activist Greta Thunberg speaking to the United Nations and the U.S. Congress? She's a teenager from Sweden, passionate and articulate about the environment. This is part of what she said at the U.N.: "This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here speaking. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us for hope. How dare you! ... We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is the money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!"

Greta is a prophet, calling us older people to account for the legacy we're leaving to her generation. Her words wrenched my heart, and some of the responses on Twitter wrenched me in a different way. People have been saying nasty, sarcastic things despite her obvious sincerity. The New York Post put it this way: "Greta's parents and the climate industry have exploited her youthful idealism and rigid obsessions. They have frightened her out of her mind." Not only is this disrespectful of Greta, but what in the world do they mean by "the climate industry"?

Another voice I heard this week came from an international group of scientists, who released a major report on the state of the oceans. It read in part: "The oceans are sending us so many warning signals that we need to get emissions under control. Ecosystems, food webs and fish stocks are changing, and this turmoil is affecting humans."

We heard this message in a more personal way recently, from our young people who attended the Native Youth Event. They'd met a teenager and her mother from northern Alaska, who described the crisis their village is facing due to climate change. It's happening so quickly, and already it seems like their traditional ways have been lost for good.

All of these voices—the prophet, the mockers, the scientists and the Native people—demand a response. One thing that haunts me is that the church has usually been silent on this issue. We've taken the wonders of Creation for granted, and we've let the Bible be misunderstood as encouraging people to take whatever they want.

It's time for us to repent, to change our ways, to make a new beginning. We've heard what scientists have said about the damage already being done to the environment and how critical it is to make changes now. Greta Thunberg has a simple motto: "Act on science." A strong consensus has been reached and we should be doing more than just listening.

I'm not a scientist but a religious leader, and there are some observations I'd like to make from that point of view. The first is that Creation is sacred.

Abba Antony was a monk who went off into the desert in Egypt seventeen hundred years ago. He lived very simply in a cave, with just a blanket and a skin of water and some food. One day a man came visiting and asked, "How can you endure living here, without even books for consolation?" Antony replied, "My book is the nature of created things, and whenever I wish I can read in it the works of God." (from Evagrius of Pontus)

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A Sacred Trust, continued

The Apostle Paul said something similar in his Letter to the Romans: “Ever since the creation of the world (God’s) eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things God has made.” (1:20)

Think about what we call sacred in the church: Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, the Holy Scriptures. Is it such a stretch to consider the Earth Holy? We expect reverence for what’s sacred in our sanctuaries—shouldn’t we show the same reverence for God’s Creation?

My second observation is that people have a special role in Creation. Isn’t that obvious? We’re able to do and build amazing things, far beyond the scope of a bird’s nest or a beaver dam. And sadly, we’ve caused a myriad of problems that threaten the creatures around us.

In the Bible’s first story all of Creation is called “good,” but humans are called “very good.” (Genesis 1) Every creature is commanded to “be fruitful and multiply,” but what’s said about people is different: “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over (all the creatures) upon the earth.” (1:26) That points to something special about humans, but what exactly is it?

Professor Ellen Davis of Duke University wrote that “The common translation ‘have dominion over’ is problematic, above all because ‘dominion’ is so easily confused with ‘domination.’ Since the Renaissance, Genesis 1:26 has frequently been invoked in the West to support the project of ‘conquering,’ ‘commanding,’ or ‘enslaving’ nature through scientific and technological means.” Prof. Davis says it’s more accurate to think of dominion as using our special skills among the other creatures, for the good of all Creation. (bibleodyssey.org)

That leads to my third observation. If Creation is sacred, and if humans have a special role within it, then a sacred trust has been given into our hands. Sadly, there are many signs that we’re failing to uphold that trust. Scientists are warning us that terrible damage has already been done to the earth.

The Bible begins with two Creation stories, and the second one is also familiar. In it God creates a beautiful garden and forms two people from the dust of the earth. Though the garden meets all their needs Adam and Eve are willful and disobedient, falling prey to temptation. They’re expelled from the garden and cursed to wander suffering through their days on earth. (Genesis 2:4)

Isn’t it eerie to connect that story with our situation today? That could be us, or maybe it already is.

If the human community is fallen, where is our hope? Because there are so many diverse people on the earth, there will be many answers to that question. As Christians we depend on God’s grace, forgiveness and mercy. We believe it’s possible to make new beginnings in our lives, and that Jesus calls us to be transformed. The challenge is to rediscover our unique role in Creation: different from the other creatures but not separate, blessing and praising our Creator, like Jesus letting the Spirit guide us on our journey through the material world.

Greta Thunberg has written a book called *No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference*. That sounds like a pretty good motto for us, being part of a small church and coming from small communities, yet having an important message to share. I wonder what each of us individually and all of us together can do to renew the sacred trust that’s been given into our hands.

Rev. Michael Carney
September 29, 2019

You're invited to a special
Holiday Meal
for the whole Community



Saturday, Nov. 16
Noon to 2:00 pm
at St. Elizabeth's Church
in Whiterocks

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Anniversary of Orlin and Sherri Taveapont (2)
Aralico Montoya (5), Lilli Collette Reed (7), Cliftene Duncan (9)
Ryder Ridley (9), Marcus Tom (15), Pepper Alanis (18)
Princess Carlson (18), Elliot Ridley (21), Chris Seaver (22)
Danielle Cuch (23), Riley Ridley (23), Irene Gardner (24)
Booker Taveapont (26), Anniversary of Jim and Sue Duffield (28)



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.

