

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



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



Dio Convention

Rev. Michael enjoyed participating in Saturday's session from a reclining chair in his living room, and as you can see, the cat was curious about it all. A small group gathered in our sanctuary to join in Sunday worship from St. Mark's Cathedral. We heard an outstanding sermon by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, who quoted Bishop Hayashi in challenging us to ask, "What DID Jesus do?"

St. Elizabeth's submitted a resolution which the Convention approved, urging the churches to regularly acknowledge Utah's Indigenous people. Since we all live on Indian land,

Our Virtual Convention

People all around the state look forward to the annual gathering of Utah Episcopalians. It always includes worship, the chance to hear from Bishop Hayashi, reports from ministry leaders and routine business. But in the Year of the Pandemic, there seems to be no business as usual.

After a postponement the Convention was held via Zoom, which worked out very well. Hats off to Craig Wirth, Nick Cockrell and other staff members who rose above the logistical and technical challenges to make the event a success. While there's nothing like being together in person, small group discussions on Zoom were very enjoyable and the ministry leaders presented their messages effectively.

What's inside:

SUNDAY WORSHIP, P.2
ART EMPOWERS, P.2
MORE GRATITUDE, P.3
SACRED LAND OF
THE UINTAH VALLEY, P. 4-5

Continued page 3

Sunday Worship



Because worship is so important to Episcopalians, we've continued to gather in small groups on Sunday mornings. We're very safety-conscious: everyone wears a mask and maintains social distance, and there's no singing or communion or coffee hour. The limit of fifteen people has not been a problem, and we're grateful to everyone for following these guidelines. For those who attend it means a lot to be able to gather together safely. The occasional presence of children is a blessing (as seen in the photos of Aveah and Caley and the museum they created during one of the sermons), as is the music that Adam Twiss shared in a video recording. Special thanks to Maria and Nehemiah Alanis for keeping the sanctuary clean and sanitized.

Michael offers two other ways people can be involved in worship each week, including a video he records on his Facebook page with prayers and his message. If you enjoy that, feel free to share it on your own Facebook page so others will see it. Michael also sends out a weekly mailing with the same content, and he's started an email list. Wherever you are, if you'd like to join in these prayers please send an email to whiterocksrev@gmail.com.

Art Empowers

We're grateful for the leadership of Becca Gardner and Sadie Santio, who created a wonderful fall program series they called "Spooky Arts Empowered." When it became clear that the local families aren't ready yet for after-school activities, the program shifted to youth group meetings as Halloween approaches. It's all on a safety-first basis (masks, social distance, etc.), and the young people who attend enjoy the creative projects.

We're also thankful to Episcopal Community Services, the new nonprofit sponsor for Art Empowers. They've taken custody of the financial gifts we've received, and this month they gave us a huge amount of help preparing a grant proposal for a major Utah charitable foundation. We don't know the outcome yet, but the prospect is very exciting. We



continue to struggle with our former sponsor, but we try to stay focused on our blessings as we get prepared to start up our programs again next year.

More Gratitude

Continuing a theme from last month's newsletter (and an ongoing conversation at St. Elizabeth's), we want to focus on our blessings in the midst of this year's challenges. A big thank-you to the Diocese of Utah for giving us a special grant (on top of the generous operating support we receive) to improve our facilities. Thanks also for the generosity of our members and friends for making it possible for us to contribute our share of the cost.



The most noticeable change—replacing the old windows in the parish hall—is not complete yet because the shades are on back order. But we're thankful for windows that actually open, as well as for the new stove in that building, carpet in the office and a new washer/dryer in the vicarage. Many thanks to our diocese for helping us make these improvements!



Our Virtual Convention, from page 1

this would remind Episcopalians of an important relationship. Forrest Cuch has written a simple statement for our congregation: *St. Elizabeth's occupies and operates upon the ancestral and traditional lands of the Ute Indian Tribe.* We're thankful that this resolution received support and have offered to help other congregations with their statements.



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.

Sacred Land of the Uintah Valley

Uncle Billy Chapoose Sr., Wapenas, was a man for the ages. When he died in the early 1970's no one knew his exact age, but his family thought he was over 100. That meant he was born just after the end of the Civil War, when the Uintah and Ouray Ute Reservation was established in northeast Utah.

The three bands of Utes who were forced onto that reservation had enjoyed a vast territory stretching from Utah's Wasatch Front (Salt Lake City) to Colorado's Front Range (Colorado Springs). They lived among dramatically rugged and beautiful mountains, but relentless waves of white settlers encroached upon them. Political influence was applied, treaties were broken and and the Utes were pushed off their land onto the reservation.

Wapenas must have been a child when his family was moved away from the rich habitat around Utah Lake and other points south to the high sagebrush desert of the Uintah Valley. In those early years the Utes were largely left alone, and they came to appreciate the free-flowing rivers and abundant wildlife at the foot of the Uintah Mountains. The Utes were not farmers, but with their relatively small population they were able to hunt, fish and gather the food they needed. Despite being displaced to a new land they remained deeply connected with their Creator, celebrating that relationship through daily prayer and seasonal ceremonies.

The combined Uintah and Ouray Reservation covered over four million acres, second in size to the Navajo Reservation. While only a fraction of the Utes' original territory, it became home to the Uintah Band (which included all the Utah bands)



as well as the Whiteriver and Uncompahgre Bands from Colorado. But the avalanche of white settlement continued, and Mormon Church leaders in the Salt Lake area were looking for new places for their people to farm and for valuable minerals. They recognized the abundant water in the Uintah Valley and made plans to develop irrigated farms on the reservation.

As a people the Utes occupied large tracts of land, but the ownership of individual parcels was completely foreign to them. The earth, like the spirit within them, was a gift from God. The land, the plants and animals, the rivers and mountains were all sacred, to be regarded with reverence. Expressing gratitude for their blessings was a daily practice. To this day Utes make offerings and say prayers when they hunt, fish and gather.

In Wapenas' day generosity and sharing were highly valued principles of the tribe. The Utes shared everything from food to caring for the young and old to providing lodging and other needs. Families and bands held the things they needed in common.

Continued, page 5

Sacred Land of the Uintah Valley, continued

Seasonal trading functioned both to exchange their surplus and to provide opportunities to socialize with people from other areas. Tribal leadership was widely dispersed; disputes were worked out locally.

Can you see the train wreck that was coming? Utah's Congressmen and Senators joined other leaders in passing the Dawes Act in 1887. It authorized the President to subdivide Native tribal communal landholdings into "allotments" for the heads of Native families. Then the Homestead Act of 1905 opened "excess" land on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation to homesteaders, who flocked into the area. Sagebrush was cleared, irrigation ditches were dug (mostly at tribal expense) and "productive" farms were established. Today less than one third of the original reservation remains with the Ute Indian Tribe.

White leaders and settlers appear to have had a variety of motivations, both good and bad. On the one hand they saw building farms and farming communities as signs of progress. But many or most of them assumed (and rightly so) that the Utes would be easy pickings in the land market, trading their allotted parcels for practically nothing. As head of a household Wapenas was allotted 160 acres, divided into two parcels. Huge swaths of the reservation changed hands, but he managed to hold on to his land. How was he able to stand strong against such overwhelming forces?

By all accounts Uncle Billy was a deeply spiritual man. He was rooted and grounded in the traditions and ceremonies of his people. Not only did he speak Ute, but he knew many of the "old words" endowed with special power. His work as a peace officer focused on reconciliation, healing and what we'd call restorative justice. He was known as a spiritual

leader, a prominent singer and fire keeper for the Sun Dance.

Because he saw the land as a gift, he treated it with reverence. In a simple outbuilding he and his friends gathered with their drum, practicing songs (prayers) for the Bear Dance, Sun Dance, Pow Wow and other occasions. The land and the prayers and his relationship with the Creator were inseparable. In the midst of the extreme disruption of Ute culture, that place remained an oasis of the sacred.

I (Forrest S. Cuch) am Wapenas' great-nephew. He was my grandmother's brother and a beloved grandfather to me. We enjoyed playing card games together, especially Quichuck, which is like Go Fish. My mother told me that Uncle Billy wanted us to keep the land in Indian ownership, so I was thankful to inherit forty acres on the Whiterocks Road. Though my career took me away from the reservation, that place kept a strong hold on my heart. I visited regularly and with my brother's help slowly made improvements, taking years to build the house I live in today.

Time has brought me a lot of personal growth and healing, and the land played a big part in that. Now that I'm retired, I get to share the gifts that have come to me. When people visit my horses or camp on the land, when foxes or sandhill cranes or elk pass by, when my friends join together in the sweat lodge, I feel Uncle Billy's spirit with us. Fifty years after the end of his life, when my son and grandchildren are here, I know that the cycles of Creation are continuing.

Forrest S. Cuch & Michael Carney