



Discerning Hearts

Newsletter of The Episcopal Community

“We are marked as Christ’s own for ever.”

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Finding Stability in an Unstable World

Sr. Hannah Winkler, CSM



Don’t get tied down. Keep your options open. Live free. These taglines reflect how little our society thinks about the value of sticking it out. We live in a fast-paced world that is anything but stable. If we don’t like a job, we quit. If we don’t like a relationship, we end it. If we don’t like a career, we go back to school. If we

don’t like where we live, we move. If we don’t like a church, we keep church shopping until we find one that we like. It’s rare to see couples celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary or know of someone who has worked at the same company for 30 or 40 years. The stability of place, people, and work is radically countercultural. Society and advertisements tell us every day not to be locked into anything, not even a cell phone plan! But stability is a call to remain where we are, in what we are doing, and to find grace in that space.

Our Community knows what stability is like. We are the oldest Episcopal monastic community for women, founded in 1865 in New York, and having a Southern Province in Sewanee, Tennessee since 1888. But we also understand stability because we are a Benedictine order. This means that we follow the Rule of St. Benedict, an instructive manual written in the 6th century by St. Benedict for the monks of his monastery. The three vows the monks in his community made for life were obedience, conversion of life, and stability. Stability was a great theme of Benedict's Rule. He understood that the key to spiritual progress came from continually making the effort to see Christ in each person, no matter how irritating. He believed that stability was sticking life out with them, right where they were and just as they were, not as we would like them to be.

In my Benedictine formation, I learned that when you try to run away physically or emotionally from something, you still bring your same old problems with you into the next situation or relationship. If you don’t work out your problems with a specific person, group, or place, you will be working it out with the next one. I discovered that when people annoy me beyond reason, it’s probably because they are demonstrating something that I’d rather not see in myself. I’ve heard it said that God keeps bringing into our lives the same issue and challenge until we learn the lesson that we are supposed to learn from it. Stability prevents us from running away from necessary growth and development. It calls us to listen attentively to God in the present moment, not looking somewhere else for where we think God might be.

All Christians promise stability at baptism. It is woven throughout the Baptismal Covenant. We are asked to continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the

prayers. This requires us to be faithful in living out each of these commitments, day in and day out. We are asked to persevere in resisting evil. This too requires our consistent response of repentance and returning to God. It’s a cycle of falling down and getting back up again and persisting in keeping the faith. Inherent within all of the responses of the covenant is the expectation that each day we will ask for God’s help in having the staying power that comes from stability to get up and try again.

Sister Hannah Winkler, CSM has been a member of the Community of St. Mary, Southern Province, for the past eight years. She made her life profession in January 2021 and became Prioress of the Community in January 2023. She helps manage the Community's website, social media, and online gift shop and promotes convent events online. She has been active in preaching at a variety of Episcopal churches and schools both in-person and online, and travels out of state to preach, give retreats, and teach adult forums at various churches. Prior to entering Community, she graduated with her bachelor's and master's degrees in nutritional sciences in 2008 and 2011 from North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, respectively. She became a licensed registered dietitian in 2011. She began her career as a clinical dietitian, first at Albemarle Hospital in Elizabeth City, NC then at Wesley Long Hospital in Greensboro, NC. There she worked in the oncology, surgical, and psychiatric units. She graduated from the University of the South with a Master of Arts in Theology in December 2020. She is looking forward to the ways God will use her diverse backgrounds as part of the Community's various ministries.



Lent 2024

Will You? by Amanda Perkins McGriff



Amanda Perkins McGriff’s book is a 5-week study for small groups that takes us through our Baptismal vows. **The Community will meet on Zoom, Sunday evenings at 5PM Central to discuss.** Volunteers are needed to lead a session or two during Lent. If you would like to help, please contact Becky Taylor or Christina Butterworth.



Circle of Leadership – Elect Nancy Young, Nomination Chair

A new Circle of Leadership (COL) will be installed at the National Gathering of The Episcopal Community in June at the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church in Louisville, Kentucky. The Community is deeply grateful for the leadership of the outgoing COL comprised of Chris Butterworth, Merry Keyser, Lorna MacDonald, Kathleen Nyhuis, Patti Joy Posan, Barbara Willis, and Nancy Young. They will continue to serve until the end of the business meeting at the National Gathering.

The COL is comprised of seven members: Three members are selected by the outgoing COL members to continue service for another three-year term and four members who meet the requirements of office in the Bylaws are elected by the general membership. Patti Joy Posan and Nancy Young, founding members of The Episcopal Community and of the Circle of Leadership, were not eligible to continue as members of the COL due to term limits.

The three members of the present COL chosen by their fellow members to continue service for another three-year term are Chris Butterworth, Merry Keyser, and Barbara Willis. The four members elected by the general membership are Barbara Harris, Lorna MacDonald, Kathleen Nyhuis, and Rebecca Taylor. The three returning members of the COL ensure continuity and experience of leadership to the Circle while the four members elected by the general membership allow former COL members to be reelected and also promotes the election of new leadership.

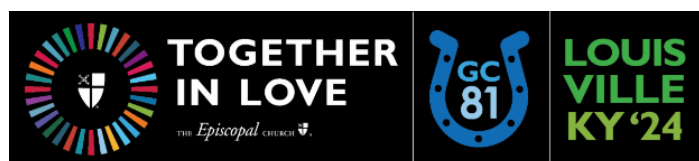
Once the new Circle of Leadership is installed, they will meet and designate from among themselves a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary.



Event Calendar 2024

Meetings are on Zoom unless otherwise noted. **Sunday evening Compline**, weekly at 6:00 PM CT

- **Friday Morning Prayer**, weekly at 9:00 AM CT
- **February 18 – March 17 - Lenten Book Study** – 5:00 PM CT
- **March 3 – Installation** of Vicki Hightower and Phyllis Hunt, Church of the Holy Nativity, Panama City, FL, 8:00 AM ET
- **April 11 – Executive Committee** 4:00 PM CT
- **April 25 – Circle or Leadership** 4:00 PM CT
- **April 27 – Meet author, Jane Tomaine** 5:00PM CT
- **June 23-28 - GC81 Louisville, KY**



Compline Schedule

- 03 March - Cynthia Sand
- 10 March - BB Vaughn & Carol Putnam
- 17 March - Merry Keyser
- 24 March - Palm Sunday - Becky Taylor
- 31 March – Happy Easter (no compline)

The community offers compline over Zoom each Sunday Evening at 5PM CST. Please join us! If you would like to lead compline, please contact Please contact Becky Taylor at bekatay@me.com



March Birthdays

Jayne Holmes
Barbara Watkins-Frey-Beeman
Denni Conner



Convention Tips

Adapted from the National ECW

- Make sure you bring comfortable shoes; you will walk a fair amount each day.
- Remember all your prescription medicines and the contact information for your pharmacy at home.
- Bring over-the-counter medications with you as well. It is usually more convenient and less expensive than the options near the convention center. It would be wise to pack a COVID test kit, just in case.
- A roller bag makes it easy to carry notebooks, papers and goodies from the meetings and the Exhibit Hall. You may want to label your bag. There will be many identical bags out there.
- Pack a few of your favorite snacks and protein bars. Bring a refillable water bottle. After all, we are Episcopalians and want to take care of our creation by limiting the number of plastic bottles we use.

Don't forget to pack a sweater, jacket, or shawl. The meeting rooms can get cold!



Recipe of the Month will return next month!



Your contributions make a difference!

Payments may be made through PayPal, (use the drop-down tab to select a fund or to pay your dues) or by check mailed directly to The Episcopal Community, P.O. Box 242, Sewanee, TN 37375. When paying by check, please designate which fund or annual dues in the memo line.

