



Discerning Hearts

Newsletter of The Episcopal Community

"We are marked as Christ's own for ever."

Volume: 2026 Issue 10

The Community's Election Process

If our mid-term elections were not enough, it is exciting for The Episcopal Community to begin its every three year election process as well. I am happy to announce that the Circle of Leadership has unanimously ratified the following members of the Nominating Committee: Denni Conner, Martha Estes, and Carol Putnam. We give thanks for their willingness to serve.

The Circle of Leadership has chosen the following three of its current members to continue: Barbara Harris, Merry Keyser, and Kathleen Nyhuis. That will leave four slots to be filled. On November 1 the Nominating Committee will be sending out a letter and form to each member for her thoughtful, prayerful consideration to allow her name to go forward. Becky Taylor and Barbara Willis who currently serve are eligible for election, however Christina Butterworth and Lorna MacDonald are not, as they have timed out having served three consecutive terms.

There were some mistaken ideas set out in the article last month. Our members do not run for a position. We offer our leadership to the Circle of Leadership who selects its officers. Another was that it was never required that someone serve at the national level to qualify as a nominee. Our bylaws state a requirement of "prior leadership experience at the diocesan level." Bishop Diane, at a recent Circle meeting explained that sometimes it is needed to override the "rules" in order to move forward. For instance, if we had not, we would not have women priests. I believe we all want be open to new ideas and not limit true leaders. All this being said, there is wisdom in prior experience, and the Nominating Committee is asked to consider the intent of

the words, if not the exact words when verifying qualifications.

The nomination forms must be received by the Nominating Committee by November 30th (a date set by our bylaws). The committee will verify the eligibility of nominees and complete the slate if there are insufficient nominees. The forms will be mailed or emailed and conveyed unopened to the committee.

The month of December is for collection of the consent forms and biographical information of nominees by the committee. After prayer consideration, on January 15 (again date set by bylaws), the Nomination Committee reports a slate of the nominees they are recommending for the four open positions on the Circle of Leadership. Our bylaws do not allow write-in or nominations from the floor. The committee will publicize the slate of nominees with a brief summary of qualifications via website, enews, and mailing to all members.

If there is need for an election, with more candidates than openings, ballots will be issued on February 1, and should a run off election be needed, again on March 1. The earliest announcement could be January 15 and the latest possible announcement to the membership will be March 30.

Installation of the 2027-2030 Circle of Leadership will be at General Convention 82. The new COL will select its officers.



October Birthdays

Christina Butterworth
Julie Cook (novice)
Theresa Townsend



An Opportunity for Grace

Not long ago, I set out with my walker and sneakers, hoping to build up my distance by walking a little at a time. Across from my house is a lovely park with a circular path, about a quarter mile around. I thought I would try a couple of laps and see how far I could go. About halfway around, I needed to stop. As I looked for a place to sit, I met a woman, and we began to talk. She kindly offered to walk with me as I continued around the circle.

As we walked together, she shared some of her story. Jackie had been raised Episcopalian but had drifted away from God over the years. Recently, she had begun attending what we would call an evangelical church, and there she had begun to rediscover her faith. I was deeply moved to realize that, although she had grown up in the church, she had never really come to know God or Jesus in a personal way. By the end of our walk—three laps for me—we had become prayer buddies.

Jackie does not live nearby; she had simply been coming home from work and felt the need to stop and think. She does not work near my house, and the park is not visible unless you are already inside my neighborhood. This was a true God moment!

Now we meet whenever her schedule allows. Sometimes we walk; other times we simply sit and talk. We honor prayer requests and thanksgivings. I listen as she talks through challenges at work, and she helps me see the world a little more widely. Together, we delight in the park's small daily miracles—clouds, flowers, birds, and animals. Each day brings something new, and we have given one another the beautiful gift of joy.

Perhaps there is a park, senior center, or rehabilitation facility near you. Take a walk. Pause and greet someone new. Do not be afraid to offer a blessing along the way; you never know what joy God may bring to both of you.

Barbara Harris

A Big Thank You!

To all who have sent in your forms with updates and corrections, we thank you! We were tickled by the kind notes and even an illustration that accompanied the forms. If you have not sent your form back, please do so at your earliest convenience. We want the directory to be as accurate as possible.



Event Calendar

Meetings are on Zoom. All times Central time.

- Saturday - Compline 10 PM
- Sunday - Compline 6:00 PM
- Tuesday - Social Hour 4:00 PM
- Friday - Morning Prayer 9:00 AM
- Thursday, October 1- Exec, Comm
- Thursday, October 15 – CoL
- **Sunday, November 15 – Annual Meeting & Plenary (attendance is mandatory)**
3:30 Eastern, 2:30 pm Central, 1:30 pm Mountain, 12:30 pm Eastern



Vespers

10-04	Lorna MacDonald
10-11	Barbara Harris
10-18	Barbara Willis
10-25	BB, Carol & Denni

All are welcome! Zoom link is sent out on Wednesdays. If you would like to lead compline, please contact Lorna MacDonald:
worship@theepiscopalcommunity.org

What we are Reading

Holy Cross Circle in Nevada is reading Richard Rohr's **Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life**



A Gentle Invitation to Morning Prayer

Each Friday morning, the Community gathers over Zoom for Morning Prayer—a simple and faithful way to turn our hearts toward God at the start of the day. For those on the West Coast, 7:00 a.m. may come early, yet at least two of us rise and join with glad hearts. For those on the East Coast, 10:00 a.m. may feel well into the morning. Wherever we are, we come together to offer prayer, thanksgiving, and companionship in Christ.

We begin by making space for one another—sharing a brief check-in, listening with care, and remembering that even across distance, we are gathered in God's presence. Then we pray the Green Mountain Abbey Morning Prayer service, available through the Diocese of Vermont website.

For those still waking, Morning Prayer is a gentle opening of the day to God's blessing. For those already moving through the morning, it is a holy pause—a chance to breathe, give thanks, and notice how God is moving in our lives.

Whenever you are able, we hope you will join us. Come as you are, with whatever the morning holds, and may we feel the Spirit among us as we pray together.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89258940254?pwd=emU5V2x4UIRCm3dtRmJjajJ6V3B3Zz09>

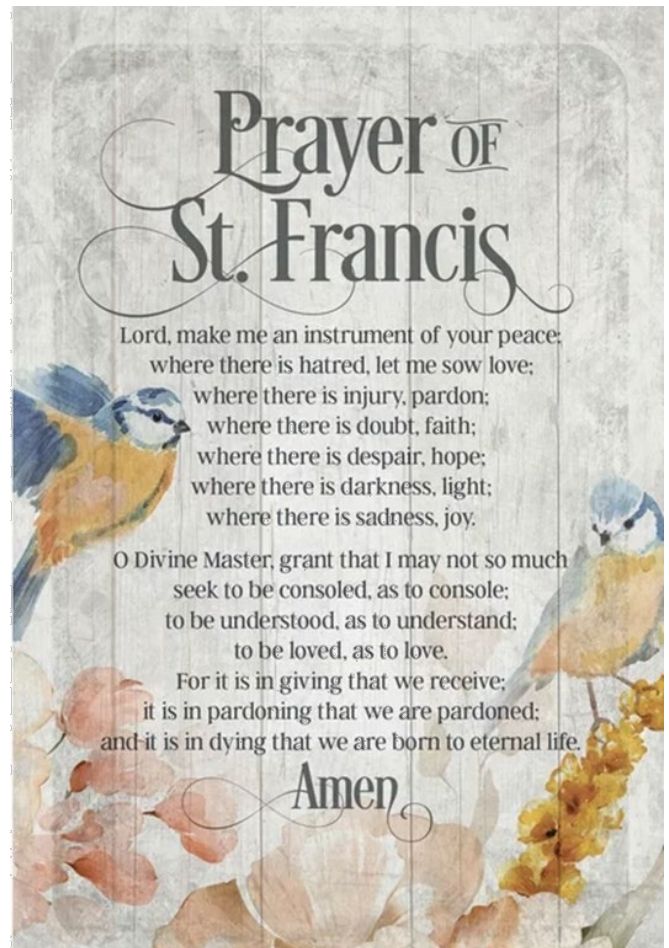


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The Community Travels!



Carol Putnam made a trip to Seattle, Washington to help her aunt and met up with Kathleen Nyhuis for a visit.



While travelling around the country visiting family, Denni Conner stopped in Loma Linda, California to have lunch with Barbara Harris!

We hope to see more of these great pictures!

Let's Spread Gratitude

Let's generate gladness and goodness together. Keep being your real, honest, loving, and beautiful self. Embracing our true selves, flaws and all. Let's celebrate our individually and treat ourselves with kindness and love. Take a minute or 5 or 10 to reflect, manifest, pray, dream, doddle, whatever makes you happy!

Today I am

Grateful for:

I am letting go of:

I want to feel:

Today I saw:



Do you need a snail mail copy of *Discerning Hearts*? Contact Barbara Harris at communication@theepiscopalcommunity.org



Recipe of the Month

Tortellini with Sausage & Cherry Tomatoes

Time 30 minutes

Yield Serves 4

30 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 pound bulk sweet Italian sausage, or links with casings removed
2 garlic cloves, sliced thin
4 cups chicken broth
12 ounces dried cheese tortellini
6 ounces cherry tomatoes, halved
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, for garnishing

Instructions

Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add sausage and cook, breaking meat into small pieces with spoon, until no longer pink, about 4 minutes.

Add garlic and cook until fragrant, for about 30 seconds. Add broth and pasta and bring to a boil. Cook, stirring occasionally, until pasta is tender, for about 15 minutes.

Stir in tomatoes and cook until slightly softened, for about 2 minutes. Sprinkle with basil and serve with Parmesan.

By Alli Berkey

