

CANTERBURY TALES

AUGUST 2023

Vicar

The Rev. Sharon Sheffield

Bishop's Committee

Allen Stout, *Bishop's Warden*
Shelley Arnold, *People's Warden*
Andrea Utzman, *Clerk*
Lynne Richmond, *Minutes Secretary*
Lance Brooks, *Treasurer*
John Mitchell, *Bookkeeper*
Jane Gordon-Topper
Camelia Jolly
Jeremy Richmond
Sue Williams

Minister of Music & Organist

Editor of Canterbury Tales
William Henderson

Associate Organist

& Webmaster
Marc Skuster

St. Thomas of Canterbury

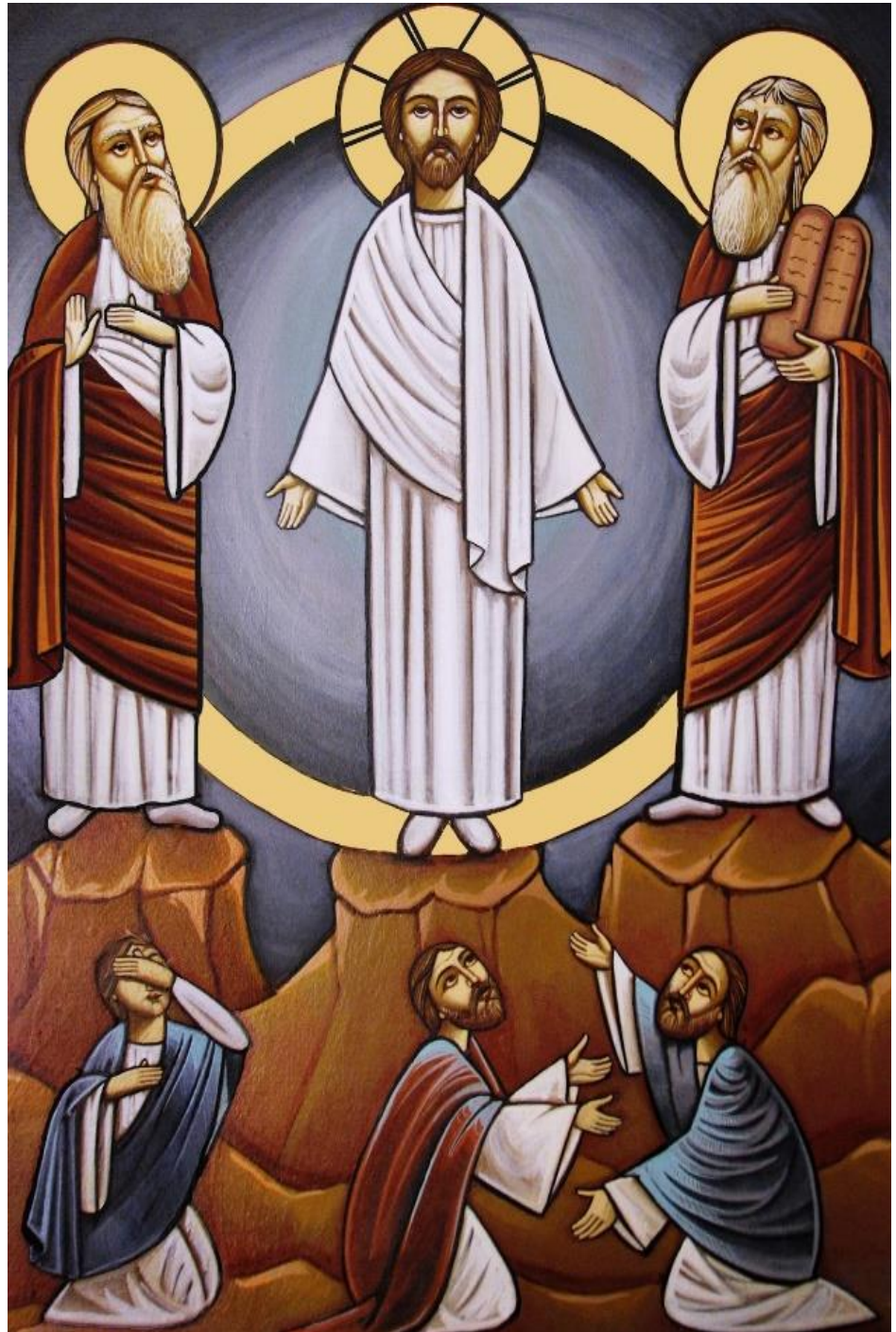
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FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

AUGUST 6

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The Feast of the Transfiguration is one of the three “Lesser Feasts” which takes precedence over our regular Sunday lectionary (the others are the Feast of the Holy Name and the Feast of the Presentation). We don’t get to celebrate the Transfiguration very often, because it has a fixed date, so when it hits a Sunday, we really need to celebrate! Please be sure to come to church on August 6 as we remember and celebrate this church feast.

BACKPACK/BRIEFCASE BLESSING

AUGUST 6



We will have our annual “Blessing of the Backpacks on Sunday, August 6 at both services. All the supplies we’ve collected for children in the Long Beach School System will be blessed prior to being given to Long Beach Family Services for distribution. All current students and education professionals are also invited to bring their backpack, briefcase, laptop, or any other item used at work or school so that it - and you! - can be blessed for the start of the school year.

HOLY WATER OPTIONS

People have asked recently if we can bring back the small holy water stoup at the main church doors, which was removed at the start of the COVID shutdown. As many churches have returned to having holy water fonts and stoups, it is possible for us to bring ours back, as well. But we want to know: Would you like the single basin to return, or would you prefer to continue having the individual holy water cups?

Please let Mother Sharon and Diane Silk know if you have a preference either way – we want to be sure we do what works best for our whole community. Thanks for your help!

VACATION INFO



Mother Sharon and Mike will be on vacation August 18-30. Father Gary Commins will preach and preside both Sundays, and Father Michael Fincher will be available for pastoral needs during that time.

LABOR DAY CLOSURES

The office will be closed on Monday, September 4, in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

Financial Updates

While we are generally doing well financially, we are about \$3000 behind in regular pledge contributions as of the end of June. Summer is always a low period in our finances, as people go away on vacation, or have family come visit, and we may not be in church every Sunday. Unfortunately, while we can take vacations, our bills do not! If at all possible, please keep up with your weekly and monthly pledge commitments, especially in the summer months. If you have any questions about your pledge or would like to know if you're up to date, please email the church office and we will be happy to help you out. Thank you for your efforts in keeping St. Thomas solvent!

BISHOP'S WARDEN REPORT

As we begin the month of August, we continue in "ordinary time" liturgically in our church calendar. But in the "to do" world, we begin to stir and think about the upcoming school year, Fall sporting events, a holiday season that will culminate in Christmas, and all the St. Thomas activities that correspond to those happenings. And while church attendance often lags a little during the Summer months due to members' vacations (and exemplified by the Bishop's Committee not meeting physically during the month of August), we anticipate and encourage a "rebound" in the coming weeks as we bring our Summer-reinvigorated selves back to the mission of serving God through His Church.

There are many activities planned for our Fall season, including the Blessing of the Backpacks to kick off the school year, and monthly events meant to provide opportunities for fellowship, Christian growth, and to help us to meet our fundraising goals. I highly encourage you to check the bulletins, website and other communications to put those events on your personal

schedule. We want to see everyone at these events so we can enjoy each other's company, and so we can work together to make us successful in our ongoing "**Path to Parish**" (P2P).

Shelley Arnold, our People's Warden, has been very active in working on our facilities, repairing and replacing toilets and working on protecting our roofs from the (hopefully) upcoming rains. She has also been very active in planning so many of the activities being planned for the Fall (and beyond). **THANK YOU SHELLEY!** Please touch base with her to help as much as you can to make them successful.

One final note: **Important**: I want to encourage anyone who has questions about the schedule, the buildings, upcoming events, etc. to reach out to myself, Shelley, or another member of the Bishop's Committee for answers. Of course, you can also reach out to Mother Sharon, especially for pastoral concerns (we can define these in an upcoming issue, if needed). When Sharon is on her day off (Fridays), or on vacation, it is particularly important to let her have her leisure time. On those days in particular, please use the Bishop's Committee as your first resource for most non-pastoral questions. My phone number is (714) 381-5910. I can be reached by phone or text, or I can be reached by email at astout1176@gmail.com. **Mother Sharon and Mike will be on vacation from August 18-30**, and Father Gary Commins will be our supply priest. During this time off, please reach out to me or another BC member with questions or concerns, except in the most critical circumstances.

So, please enjoy the rest of the Summer days, protect yourself from UV rays, stay hydrated, and recharge your batteries so we can kick off the upcoming liturgical and events year with great energy, and infused by the Holy Spirit!

Allen Stout
Bishop's Warden

People's Warden Report - Shelley Arnold

The two toilets in the women's restroom have been replaced along with the angle stops and supply lines. The flange on one of the toilets is not in great shape, but we should be able to "live with it" for a while. (Replacing it is best done when we replace the bathroom tiles - otherwise there will be jackhammering).

A big **SHOUT OUT** to Justin Lowrey of Lowrey Plumbing. Fast, clean, and polite. If you would like his contact information, please let Shelley know.



We have not yet got all the bids in for the roofing repair. It is still being worked on.

The stage in Crosby Hall will soon be cleared off in preparation for Fall Events.

Raise the Roof Fundraiser News

We have a slew of fantastic events coming up this Fall.

August 19th

Backyard BBQ at Dave and Rosemary's

Hot dogs, hamburgers and all the sides.

6:00 - 9:00 pm

\$20.00

September 16

Sing Along with Piano Man Kevin Wood

At St. Thomas with a Reception to Follow

4:00 pm

\$20.00

(more info in this edition of the CT)

October 22

Halloween Afternoon

Treats and Fun for the whole family

Noon-ish (after Church)

\$10.00

Mark Your Calendars

Our "Welcome Back Sunday" is scheduled for September 10. We will kick off our fall programming and have opportunities to sign up for upcoming events and ministry areas. We hope you'll make a special effort to come to church and hear about what's planned for the rest of the year.

Come Sing with The Piano Man



Please join us on Saturday, September 16 at 4:00pm for our "Piano Man" fundraiser! Kevin Wood, Long Beach singer-songwriter, will entertain us with old favorites and original compositions. There may also be some surprise guest artists! A reception will follow the concert, and Kevin's CDs will be available for sale.

Tickets are \$20 at the door, and all proceeds go to our "Raise the Roof" capital campaign. A flyer is included with this Canterbury Tales for you to share with friends and neighbors.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS WANTED: Do you have an unused instrument in reasonable repair? Would you like to brighten the lives of students who can't afford to purchase their own instrument? Or give an instrument to a veteran or other person in need? If so, please consider making a donation, either instrumental or monetary, to the Collage Instrument Donation Program. Collage is dedicated to helping musicians have instruments and a place to play them, and is a non-profit organization, so your donations are tax-deductible. You can find out more about the program at <https://www.collageartculture.org/instrument-donations-student-programs> To make a donation or find out specific donation details, email richard@collageartculture.org

A Meditation: Romantic Rationalism

My meditation this month will be a little different. I usually write it as a thought piece about one or more of the scripture readings from the month's lectionary. This will be a more introspective self-exploration of a topic that I encountered in an online presentation recently. In this presentation, the speaker was talking about the ideas of British spiritual writer C.S. Lewis. Many people know Lewis as the author of the *Narnia* series, which was a Christian allegory of the Gospel written so as to be accessible to younger readers. He is also famous for his book *Mere Christianity*.

The presenter described Lewis' approach to the world, his spirituality, as being an example of "romantic rationalism." The remainder of this meditation will include a dose of philosophy and literary theory, and my personal reflection about what Lewis' romantic rationalism means for my own spiritual reflection.

Lewis is a romantic in the sense that his Christianity is suffused with feelings of joy and love, and because of his ability to perceive a liminal, light-filled world that goes beyond the merely physical or material. It might be a stretch to use this word, but it is a world that contains magic, and not merely "stuff." On the other hand, Lewis was an atheist as a young man, and was a trained academic – eventually becoming an "Oxford Don," a literature professor at Oxford University (alongside J.R.R. Tolkien, the author of the *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* books). As was appropriate for this role, Lewis was adept at using facts and logic in his writings and his arguments – thus the label as a rationalist. Given these two modes of Lewis' thought, drawing from the ethos of both the Romantic and the Naturalistic periods in English literature, it is fair, I think, to label his thought as romantic rationalism.

So, two questions remain. First, how can these sometimes polar and contradictory approaches be combined in one person? And second, what does that mean for me, as I reflect on my own spirituality?

Lewis was able to accept the outcomes of scientific observations and experimentation, and he was able to accept history (interpretation aside) as being demonstrable and

verifiable. Yet, he also fully accepted the idea that miracles happened in history. When asked if he was a fundamentalist, he responded:

“I have been suspected of being what is called a Fundamentalist. That is because I never regard any narrative as unhistorical simply on the ground that it includes the miraculous. Some people find the miraculous so hard to believe that they cannot imagine any reason for my acceptance of it other than a prior belief that every sentence of the Old Testament has historical or scientific truth. But this I do not hold, any more than St. Jerome did when he said that Moses described Creation “after the manner of a popular poet” (as we should say, mythically) or than Calvin did when he doubted whether the story of Job were history or fiction. The real reason why I can accept as historical a story in which a miracle occurs is that I have never found any philosophical grounds for the universal negative proposition that miracles do not happen” (Reflection On the Psalms).

In this sense, I fully agree with Lewis. I actually see the Universe itself as the “miracle of miracles.” There is no scientific explanation for its existence in the first place. And even if science can come to understand the physics of what preceded the “Big Bang,” that will not answer the question of what came before that. This is what philosophers might call the “infinite regress.” I also accept that miracles have occurred within natural history (e.g., the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus). But scientific knowledge must be accounted for and cannot simply be wished away.

So, scientific results must be accounted for (while understanding that future discoveries might well overturn presently-accepted results). And events in history must be validated as best we can by corroborating evidence, artifacts, and ethnocultural context. Yet, miracles do occur (or have occurred) in history. And those are signposts that point to God. And the two miracles that I wholeheartedly accept as such are the Universe, and Jesus.

But what do you think?

Allen Stout



Birthdays

Larry Shaw 8/10, Alberto Ossa 8/12

Tim Garvin 8/15, Lillian Bennett 8/19

John Mitchell 8/22

ANNIVERSARIES

MICHAEL & STACEY BERGMAN 8/8

KEN & SUE WILLIAMS 8/22



The world, especially the people of the United States, and for peace all over the world and wherever there is oppression or trouble.

Serving in the Armed Forces at home and around the world: members of the U.S. Army: **Adam** and Boston; the U.S. Marine Corps: Sean, Adelangel and Jesse; the U.S. Air Force: Jordan, Joshua and Carlos; the U.S. Navy: **Jonathan**; and the U.S. Coast Guard: **Jennifer** and Corey.

The protection and guidance of Parishioners and Friends: Bertha, Ariana, Alyssa, Ana, Joe, Deb, Erin and her family, Joey and his mothers Beth and Jan, Penny and her family, Chris and his family, Daniel, Becky, Sandra, Alex, Josef, Brandon, Rosie, Nathan, Gayle's doctor, Patricia's children, Michele's doctor, Sarah S., Ginny, Wendy, Pam, Deb, and baby Jordan's family.

The healing of Parishioners and friends: **Karen, Liz, Carlene, Samantha, Patrick, Allyson, Bert, Allen, Joanne, Rosie, Jim, Bill**, Linda M., Diana, Susanne, Ana, Joe, Rae Ann, Kathy, Linda O., Gingi, Becky, Michael, Kathryn, Asgeir and Rosa, Beverly, Paige, Eric, Diane, Toni, Rachel, Jane, Laura, Tori, Lance, Karen, Jared, Scott, Jeff, Sean, Geri, Jim L., Lu, Richard, Cindy, Kim, Jason, Jennie, Pam, Gayle, Lori, Nancy W., Bruce, Mary, Janice, Michele, Patricia B., Carolyn, Carmen, Ruben, David F., Ginny, Terry and Karen, Melanie, Elizabeth, Patricia, Julia, David, Sister Susan Alice, Sister Ann Francis, Jessica, Maria, Patrick, Robin, Brother Dennis, Father Richard and support for all families and friends caring for loved ones, the people of Ukraine, India, Vietnam, Peru, Nigeria, Haiti, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Myanmar and all parishioners and friends with health problems.

Homebound and Special Needs: **Karen, Samantha** and the homeless, the poor and the unemployed, affordable housing for families, the end of COVID-19, Ebola, AIDS, and Cancer in the world, and for those suffering from mental illness.

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