

THE EPISTLE

A Letter to the Saints in Sparks

From The Creation Care Corner

By Robin Towne, Creation Care Co-Chair



SUMMER IS IN FULL SWING IN

northern Nevada. You may consider our temperatures tolerable for a desert, or perhaps a dry heat and not too bad compared to the humidity on the East Coast. Regardless of how you view our summers, you probably agree that we have lots of sunny days that are often accompanied by a warm breeze. Why talk about our summer weather? Because this is perfect weather to string a rope or clothesline up outside and let Nevada's sunshine dry your laundry. Some benefits of using a clothes line include: conservation of

electricity (and/or natural gas), experiencing a connection with the sun and the breeze, and offering a visible display of working with nature to meet our needs instead of relying on a machine. I'm sure you can add more benefits to the list. This is not exactly a challenge, but if you would like to show off your clothes line, post a picture on the creation care bulletin board, or share them on Instagram with the hashtag: #CreationCareSPS. The Creation Care ministry meets on the second Sunday of the month following worship in the choir room. Our next meeting is Sunday, July 12. Everyone is welcome. ✕

Senior Warden Report

By Margaret Bouzek, Senior Warden

I WANT TO START BY thanking those who participated in the Discernment Day retreat. It is the first step in listening to the future goals of the parish.



We have begun a project to clean out the accumulation of "things" in all the storage areas of the church building. If you want to participate in this process please see me or contact me at margaret.bouzek@gmail.com

I am looking forward to celebrating on the Fourth of July. We often have people who use our parking lot to watch the fireworks from the Nugget. Don't be alarmed if you see them here. If you wish to do the same, please feel free. ✕

A Fourth of July Reflection

By Mother Hannah, Rector

AS WE GATHER WITH FAMILY AND friends this Fourth of July for picnics, barbecues, and fireworks, we also pause to give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy as a nation. Before the Declaration of Independence was adopted, John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail that this anniversary "ought to be commem-

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Walking in Love: Northern Nevada Pride & The Christian Witness

By John Hannah, Vestrymember



ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, St. Paul's will walk in the Northern Nevada Pride parade and host a community booth. We'll offer treats, share conversation, and witness to Christ's love through hospitality and welcome. We hope you'll join us.

Before we do, let's address a question many Christians ask: "Should Christians celebrate Pride?"

When I read the Gospels, I see Jesus consistently choosing love over condemnation. He welcomed those whom society rejected, stood alongside those on the margins, and called us to love God and love our neighbors. Judgment belongs to God. Our calling is to love. The LGBTQIA+ community has experienced generations of rejection, discrimination, and exclusion. As followers of Christ, we have an opportunity to offer something different: friendship, dignity, and welcome.

Pride began after the 1969 police raid on the Stonewall Inn in New York City. Since then, it has become both a celebration of identity and a call for equal dignity and human rights. For many people, Pride is one of the few places they can

can safely and openly be themselves.

How can anyone claim we are the "land of the free" when freedom is granted only to those who fit specific molds? All people are created equal. By definition, "equal" excludes any qualifier based on skin color, gender, orientation, age, or belief. When we exclude anyone, we break the very definition of equality.

Some ask, "Why does the LGBTQIA+ community get a special month?" Pride is not about special treatment. It recognizes a long history of struggle and reminds us that many people still face discrimination simply because of who they are.

As Christians, we believe every person bears the image of God. When we treat people with dignity, compassion, and respect, we reflect the love of Christ.

If you'd like to participate on September 12, we'd love to have you. You can walk in the parade, help staff our booth, or both. A sign-up sheet will be available soon. Let's walk together—not in judgment, but in love. ✕

StPaulsSparks.org

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orated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty." Alongside the celebrations, he imagined prayer.

One of my favorite expressions of that prayer is our beloved hymn America the Beautiful. Written by poet, professor, and social reformer Katharine Lee Bates and later set to music by Samuel Ward, choirmaster of Grace Episcopal Church in Newark, it has long been part of our Episcopal tradition.

The stanza that always moves me is this: "America! America! God mend thine every flaw / Confirm thy soul in self-control / Thy liberty in law."

Notice that this is not a song of self-congratulation. It is a prayer. It gives thanks while asking God to continue shaping us into a nation where liberty, justice, and dignity are more fully inhabited by all.

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us to pray regularly for our nation and for those who lead us. Especially in this Season of Discernment at St. Paul's, as we practice listening together for God's voice, may we also pray that God continues to mend our own hearts and the life of our country with wisdom, mercy, and grace. May God bless the USA—and continue to transform the USA—from sea to shining sea. ✕

Are Church Bells an Antiquated Tradition? Summer Book

By Karl Riclesberger, Vestrymember



IN 2024 I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF visiting the Benedictine Christ in the Desert Monastery in the Chama Valley of New Mexico. I had followed the monastery for years and dreamed of attending a silent retreat there because of its beautiful practice of chanting the Daily Office. When I arrived, I received the monastery's daily schedule of prayer services and decided to attend Vigils at 4:00am on my first morning. At 3:45am, the chapel bell rang three times, announcing the new day and calling the community to prayer. It rang again before the 6:10am Eucharist, at the beginning and end of the workday, and one final time before Compline at 7:15pm. Throughout the day, the bell gently gathered the community into a shared rhythm of prayer, work, and rest.

When I returned home, I became curious about the tradition of church bells. According to Fr. Corey, an Episcopal priest and author of *A Theology of Church Bells*, churches have used bells since at least the sixth century to summon communities to worship.

Traditionally, a bishop blesses the bell and often gives it a name during its consecration. Church bells also echo the silver trumpets of the Old Testament, which called God's people to worship. The rite for blessing a church bell says it calls the faithful to worship, awakens faith and devotion, and proclaims God's presence. Like bread, wine, water, oil, palms, and ashes, the bell becomes an outward sign that points us toward God's grace. Each time it rings, it reminds us of Christ's presence among us and announces the Good News to the world.

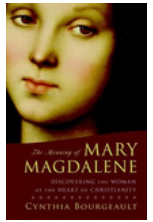
For that reason, your Vestry has approved the return of a beloved tradition at St. Paul's. Beginning in June, our church bell rings before the 10:00am Sunday service, inviting the community to worship and proclaiming the hope of the Gospel.

We hope its joyful sound becomes a familiar reminder that all are welcome in this place. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: karlfr@sbcglobal.net. ✕

Study

OUR BOOK STUDY

of *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene* by Cynthia Bourgeault



continues after church from 11:40am–12:40pm in the nursery. We'll discuss Chapters 9–12 on July 5 and Chapters 13–17 on July 19, when we'll also celebrate the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene. Hope to see you there! ✕

Creation Care Pics



TREE TIDINGS: Parishioners participated in special, forestry prayer stations at our Earth Day observance in June.

Upcoming Events

- July 4 250th Birthday of the United States
- July 5 Dr. Jon Mittelstadt preaching
- July 12 Ben's CyberSecurity Class (see back page)
- July 19 The Feast of St. Mary Magdalene
- Oct 10 Diocesan Convention



CYBER SECURITY WITH BEN



Sunday, July 12

After Church, 11:30am - 12:30pm - ISH

Ben Gallagher, our music director,
is also a Cyber Security Engineer.
Come hear his tips for staying safe online.
Not a “doom and gloom” class.
It will be empowering, and even, fun!

Invite a Friend!