



THE LABYRINTH

St. Luke & St. Stephen Review

Fall 2021

The Labyrinth Review is a quarterly publication (primarily electronic) featuring the thinking, writing, and visual arts of St. Luke and St. Stephen members and friends. Richard Rohr says the labyrinth is a powerful spiritual tool reminding us that life is more like a plate of spaghetti than a grid. If you have suggestions for features or would like to contribute, email Marcia Casey at caseymarcia99@gmail.com. If you like this issue, please let us know.

Marcia Casey & Jeanne St John, Editors

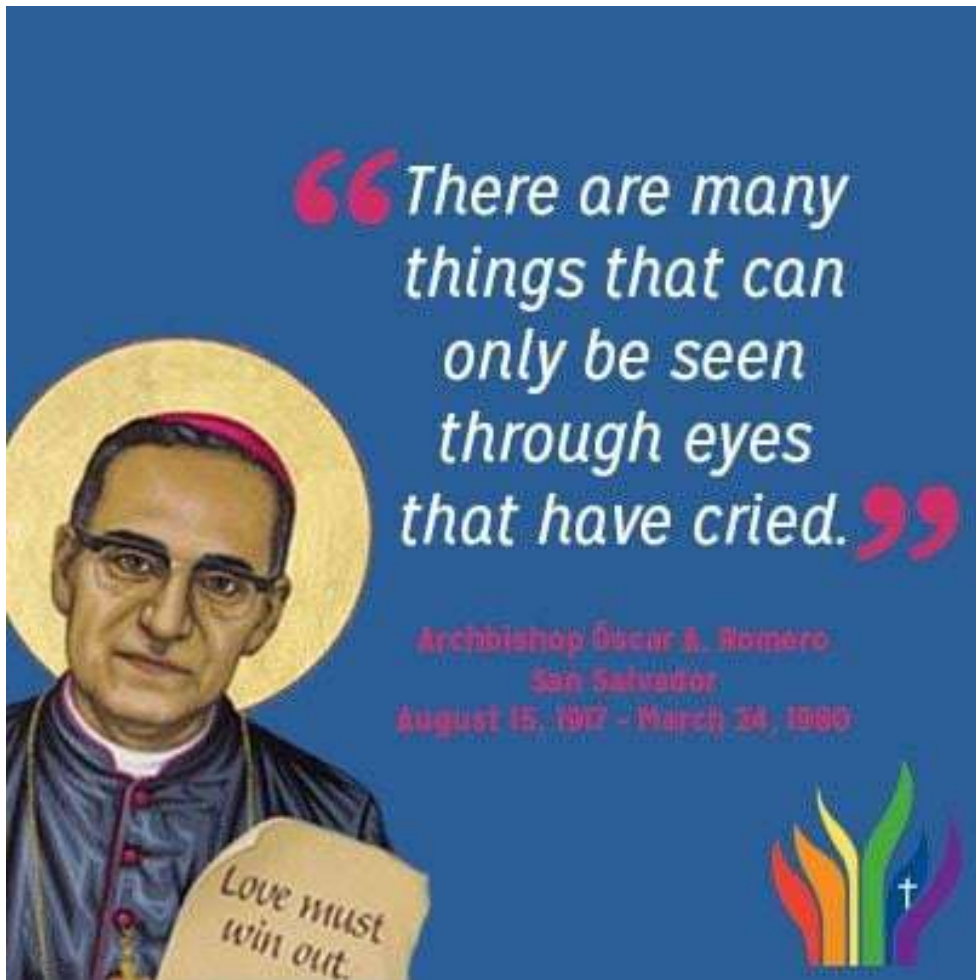
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Suffering & Transformation

by *The Rev. Dr. Judith+ Jones*

Everyone suffers. Though some people seem to live a charmed life for a time, eventually their loved one will die, or they will be seriously ill, or they will struggle with changes in their bodies and minds as they age. Many people live with past or present trauma; others live with depression or other mental illnesses. Though suffering comes in many forms, it is a universal human experience.

Suffering changes us—but those changes are not necessarily for the good. Some people become embittered or chronically angry. Others are crippled by fear, unable to move forward with their lives. Others sink into despair, finding little purpose or joy anywhere.

Even in the midst of the worst that life can deal out, however, some people discover new depths of meaning and hope. They grow into wiser, more compassionate, more loving human beings. They learn to live with eyes wide open in the present and to celebrate the beauty of small, daily moments.

Our foundational story focuses on Jesus' suffering and death, but it doesn't end there. The resurrection of Jesus changes suffering into joy and transforms death into new and larger life. God promises us that resurrection is not merely hope for the future. It is a promise of the transforming power of the Spirit in our lives here and now. Suffering and transformation are at the heart of our faith.

One of my favorite visual symbols is the tree of life—especially when it takes the form of a cross with leaves and flowers. Like the Japanese art of Kintsugi in which artists shape pottery shards into new cups and bowls, highlighting the mended places with gold, the tree of life serves as a powerful visual reminder that woundedness and brokenness do not have to be the end of the story. God takes the very worst that can happen and transforms it into new life and beauty.

This issue of the Labyrinth looks honestly at the varied ways that suffering shapes human life, including the lives of some members of our own community. It invites us to consider how we will respond to the challenges we have already experienced, those we are facing now, and those that lie ahead. What are we now, and how are we dealing with the experiences that have shaken and wounded us? What might we become if we allow God the artist to transform our brokenness into beauty?

Building the Ark

Noah, gathering
lumber and hammers, must have known
it was something big.
Troubled, he tried
to keep his mind
on the parts he knew he could do – measuring,
sawing, planing, joining – the practical
tasks that make
the hull. But he couldn't
not see how the whole
took shape, not feel the unfathomable
cavern in the hold
bowing the screeching wood
from within—he ached
to stop his ears, stop
short of begging
what wood could bear, stop
terror... he bent
nearer his work, honed
one longing: to be able
to set the next
nail true.

by Marcia Casey



Above & Below

by Dennis Moler

It Took Alzheimer's for Me to Understand My Mother

by Rand Bishop

Knowing her better makes her easier to love.



I couldn't have been more wrong...

I thought Alzheimer's had stolen every morsel of meaning from my mother's life. In fact, even as this insidious brain bandit continues to purloin her ability to reason, her reason for living has actually come into clearer focus. And, now that she is no longer inhibited by the will of a dominant partner – Dad died two months ago, just shy of their 73rd wedding anniversary – Mom is even more razor-sharp focused on what she's always been convinced she was born to do: saving the world, *all by herself*. And, woe be it to anyone she sees standing in her way – including and especially me, her septuagenarian firstborn son and the person most responsible for her safety and well-being.

Although Mom was more educated and talented, Dad controlled the agenda. It's not that he intentionally discouraged her from pursuing her own interests. But, in post-

World War II America, it was taken for granted: a man's ambitions took priority. Her dream was to join the Navy and sail the globe. Getting hitched put the kibosh on those plans. When she became pregnant with me, Mom had just received her certification as a registered nurse. My arrival snipped that ambition in the bud, before it even had a chance. Over the next 27 years, the King of the Household and a line of princely heirs, five sons in total, would rule her life.

Being trapped in a tiny, red-shingled box, isolated on the edge of suburbia, birthing and raising one boy baby after another, was not what she'd bargained for. But, stoically (*and begrudgingly*), she did what was expected, playing the dutiful role of wife/mother. Meanwhile, Dad blissfully skipped to his Lou down one yellow-brick career path after another.

Any real fulfillment for Mom would be back-burnered until the nest was empty.

When the last chick took wing, my little mother blasted off like a rocket, earning a master's degree, co-founding two schools, and spearheading the Boise Peace Quilters – featured in the Academy Award-nominated documentary, *A Stitch in Time*. True to her Finnish bloodline, she became an avid cross-country skier, trekking across remote Idaho mountains on 10-day backpacking trips.

At 50, Jean Bishop was an unstoppable force!

The move from Idaho to the Oregon coast didn't slow her down. She quickly became Lincoln County's most in-demand substitute teacher. This came to my attention at a birthday party in 2012. I'd only recently returned to my home state to be of assistance to my then 84- and 85-year-old parents. As the birthday girl had previously taught in the school district, a number of her former colleagues were in attendance. When the group overheard who I was, they swarmed around me. "You're Jean Bishop's son?" one woman exclaimed. "She was always my first call for a sub!" I wasn't a bit surprised when they informed me that Mom didn't take any sass from the kids and adhered faithfully to the curriculum. She was a substitute *teacher*, not merely a glorified babysitter.

Mom co-founded the Oregon Coastal Quilters Guild. Now, 190 quilters strong, this group produces an annual two-day craft show that draws admirers from far and wide.

Her own quilts and tapestries are textured, intricate, genuine pieces of art. And, over the decades, she conducted dozens of quilting workshops for area children.

Twelve years ago, our brotherhood was reduced by one when Bart succumbed to a fatal heart attack. Mom never picked up a needle or a scrap of fabric again. Perhaps it was grief that triggered her steady mental decline.

Still, my mother's proudest and most enduring legacy is the Stone Soup Supper. Every Monday night for 30 years, this diminutive, white-haired dynamo commanded a crew of volunteers from five area churches, feeding hot meals to as many as 80 needy and/or unhoused folks. If Christmas fell on a Monday, it mattered not. Mom made sure the meal was prepared on time, served up, and every dish, pot, fork, and knife was scrubbed, dried, and stowed away in its proper cupboard before they closed up.

I observed her in this capacity from the corner of the community room at St. Stephens Episcopal Church as I picked my guitar and sang for the thankful diners. Like a drill sergeant, she demanded efficiency and respect. Any lollygagging volunteer would receive a stern scolding, followed by a new assignment.

Week after week, year after year, the supper ran like clockwork, filling hungry belly after hungry belly. I got the distinct impression that Mom believed, if not for her, the entire operation would unravel into chaos. Then, in March 2017, a stroke mandated that she relinquish her self-appointed Stone Soup control. Still, the noble event she established and helmed has continued to provide free sustenance every Monday evening, despite the absence of its guiding light.

Since her teen years, Jean's sense of duty to family and community has been unwavering. Not only has she lived to be of service, she has taken on the responsibility of making sure that every person involved is on the same page, putting in full effort, and performing with perfection. The pressure she has continuously placed on herself to take charge and insure that every endeavor is completed to her lofty standards must have taken a toll. I imagine she's been nagged persistently by some version of the same question:

What would have happened if I hadn't been there... to organize the schools, to make sure those kids were sitting up straight and paying attention, to

notify the quilters about the meetings, to keep that charity oven fired up and those volunteers from sloughing off?

That unrelenting sense of duty, I have come to believe, is now the source of tortuous frustration and anxiety. The roles she inhabited over the course of a lifetime — mother, organizer, teacher, leader — are no longer available to her in this new world. Yet, she still hears the call, and feels an irresistible urge to answer it.

So, since the people she once rallied together, or supervised, or taught, or fed are no longer present, she can't rest until she finds them, insures that every child is learning and that every deprived human is receiving adequate nourishment. To Mom, these invisible folks couldn't possibly know what's good for them. And, it's still up to her, at 94, to conduct the righteous, selfless work of taking care of every hapless, helpless soul.

She'll be shuffling toward the door, clutching random items to her breast, on a mission to see if someone is here to pick her up, or to make sure everyone has arrived and the meeting is underway. "Where are you going?" I'll ask in my sweetest, devoted son voice.

"I have to see the people," she'll inform me, sternly, as if I'm the biggest idiot ever. I know better than to ask her who the people are. To do so would only exacerbate her angst. Instead, I'll attempt a diversionary tactic...

"Could you do me a favor and wait for a little while, Mom?" I ask. "I haven't eaten my dinner, yet."

"That's just too bad," she hisses, glaring at me through squinted, judgmental eyes. Defiantly, she grabs the door handle, intent on making her exit.

My mother's judgment of me is implicit:

I should have eaten earlier. I should be less selfish and more responsible. I'm just another one of those lollygagging volunteers, failing to live up to her standards of self-sacrifice. I'm not adequately aligned with her purpose.

I'm. Just. Standing. In. Her. Way.

And she's right. Because right now, I am dedicated to my *own* purpose, that of a firstborn son. I am, in fact, standing in the way: *of Mom hurting herself!*

I'm struggling to stave off yet another bone fracture, hoping to prevent one more ambulance ride to the ER, avoiding the next arduous battery of diagnostic tests, and trying to postpone what very well could be an excruciating, delirium-packed, final hospital stay.

Recently, an elderly former neighbor – someone who has known my parents for decades – struggled to find a compliment for my mother. “Well,” he began, pondering his words with great care, “Your mom is certainly... opinionated.”

At the time, I presumed this remark was rooted in long-outdated misogynistic attitudes. And, while there might be some truth to that assessment, I'm beginning to see how precise and accurate the man's description was. My mother is, in fact, opinionated. It's a trait I admire immensely, even as I remind myself not to take her occasional low opinion of me personally.

If there is any silver lining at all for me in what has admittedly been a trying, beyond exhausting experience caring for a 94-year-old, recently widowed, Alzheimer's stricken mother, it's that I have definitely come to a deeper understanding of her as a person. Knowing her better makes her easier to love.

And, for that, I must say, I'm grateful.

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My Mother's Eyes, photo by the author.



The Mysterious Shall Be Revealed

by Terry Ryan

Of a Dozen

class mates, together for a dozen years,
war babies, township schooled during Ike's
progress, peace, and prosperity—Judy's
Mother died, so did Rollin's and Charlie's,
Becky's Dad died. Nancy's Dad would have
died except for the new surgery leaving him
an invalid. Linda lost her right eye, Jeannie's
house burned to the ground, and Miriam's
parents abandoned her to a grandma. Wilma's
Amish parents made her stop out at sixteen.
Karen's family lost their farm, Julie had a baby
boy she never saw. Mom taught all of us until
she went insane. The hometown paper reported
the 50's, was a decade of optimism and recovery.

by Doug Yunker



The Sentinel

by Dennis Moler

Swamped

Why old men suicide.
Not depression, isolation, or loss.
Each moment a reenactment of the past.
A mundane soreness—life's worn horizon.

Laundry folded, dinner done.
House and garden tidy. The cat fed.
T.V. boring as life. Dry kiss. Love said.
She sleeps in grief, he too conscious of it all.

The argument was about?
Tired of the familiar routine.
In bed before the dish suds drain.
A colder higher tide flooding his raft.

by Doug Yunker



Deep Night

by Br. Chrysostom, aka David A. Olsen

O Lord, I fear the coming of the night.

O Lord, I fear the darkness of night.

I fear the sounds of the night.

I fear the stillness of the night, O Lord.

Stay with me, Lord.

Stay with me, Lord, for I fear, Lord.

Stay with Me (*excerpt*) *by Br. Chrysostom, aka David A. Olsen*

At the Deathbed

A *temenos*, this tenderness
we bear toward the one who rendered us
voiceless, bodiless. Still no one
speaks: the circle of our presence
impends, an impure
arc bulging up
from our anguish, pushing
past blame, attaining at last
some merciful peace, as if a belfry
roofed your head, and the unsaid words
hang ringing:

*Dear Our Father,
who held us enthralled
in unbestowed love and utterest
judgment, we
love you, forgive you, who
gave us our daily
dose of damnation, this
life, this grace, the imperfect
benediction
of gristle and bone.*

by Marcia Casey



Into the Mercy

by Dennis Moler

Remembering Kae

by *Linnea Harper*

Kae Bates, longtime St. Luke's member and wife of Jeanne St John, transcended this earth plane five years ago to continue her adventures. It is difficult to embrace loss - yet there is such magic, such attendance to life's inner and outer necessities, so many learnings, and finally, with grace, a transcendent peace for those who mourn, in every life passage. I was not in the room when Kae left us. This story is only as true as my understanding.

One Evening in August

When she could already see
the water and trees of her childhood,
the cabin at Lake of the Woods
with her family there,
gathered on shore & waiting,

her earthly angels
gathered in the limbo,
sprawling across her bed
and floating harmonies -
her favorite Jesus songs -
into the mingled surround
~ O, sweetest of sounds ~
melody, rhythm, heartbeat, breath
midwifing her passage,
preparing a way.

After one song ended,
the Tongan Deaconess
sang a verse by herself
in her native tongue
and our budding angel,
unloosed from the mind's attachment
to words and their meanings,

grew still and rose up in perfect
understanding - rose on the song she
lived by, the one she knew already
completely by heart.





Tree of Life Cross

by Hazel Hebert

What I've Learned Through Grief

by Jeanne St John

Previous deaths, those of my grandfather at the age of 69, my mother at 48, my dear friend at 54, did not prepare me for the depths of grief I would later experience. Teaching Death and Grief classes for school staff to deal with possible deaths in the school community did not prepare me.

When my wife of 35 years died from brain cancer five years ago, I was in a state of shock, unable to put one foot in front of the other, unable to read, write, keep a checkbook, or even to Google. I lost focus walking from one room to another, I lost weight because I forgot to eat. I was overcome by frequent tsunamis of grief, sneaker waves that flattened me with sobbing and sorrow.

Although we had a precious year to prepare ourselves for this dramatic “change of state,” the reality and finality of it was stunning, the quiet was deafening. No small talk, no exchange of opinions about the news, no quiet whispers before falling asleep in each other’s arms. The house was suddenly huge and unfamiliar, the sounds magnified, the silence enormous.



Eventually I needed sound, voices, company.... and the TV became a familiar companion with its offerings of drama, comedy, and news. L&O Therapy was my choice for many months when I could mindlessly “watch” hours of crime dramas inhabited by familiar and friendly characters from one of the Law & Order series. It was soothing to watch a drama unfold, a crime be solved, justice achieved, and a social justice issue addressed.... all in one hour, including 20 min. of commercials.

After two years of withdrawing from most of my church and social justice leadership roles, I gradually became more present. Friends said there was light in my eyes again, that I had emotional energy, that they could see and feel the healing.

The constant during this painful process of adjusting to life alone was the daily phone call from my only child, my dear 57-year old son Jean, a Master Chef and a

master human being. He called every day on his way to work to remind me to take my 4pm pill.... and often to talk for 20 minutes or more. He had known and loved Kae as another Mom since his late teens and was able to share memories of her that brightened my days. The strength and consistency of his daily calls were a constant in my life, a daily blessing that I could count on.

Until that Thursday when his wife called to tell me that he had just died from heart failure before they could do surgery that would probably have saved him~if he had not postponed medical attention, hoping to wait till his insurance started on Friday. My dear sweet, caring, gifted son became one of the 45,000+ who die in this country each year because they don't have health care.

Nothing prepares you for the death of a child of any age. It's against the laws of nature for a parent to outlive a child. It's wrong at every level, and yet it happened. It's not right to have to think about how to honor your child's life~where, when, with whom?

This statue is called "Emptiness" and was created by a grieving parent. It is a great attempt at describing how a parent feels after losing a child.



Photo from Facebook meme, no source listed

Jean was honored in four different cities, three where he had lived and worked, and in the small town where I live we held a small gathering. His workplace in Las Vegas held a touching memorial where his employees shared stories of how he had encouraged and inspired them. In Albuquerque where he lived until he was 11, we held a small service for family and old friends in the little Episcopal Church we had attended when he was a young child. And In Carmel where he had been beloved Chef Jean for more than 30 years, a beautiful funeral mass and reception at the Carmel Mission Church was the final tribute from the whole community.

We heard stories of how he had hired and trained hundreds of young people over the years; stories of how they returned with wives

and children years later to introduce the man who had changed their lives. We heard stories of how he fed the hungry and homeless from the back door, and

carried food to those whose fears kept them hiding in the park. When Rosie died in the park, he arranged for her funeral and as her best friend, he did the eulogy.

We heard stories about the excellence and beauty of his food; how he delivered favorite meals to long-standing customers when they could no longer drive; how he saw the best in each person and gave that to them as a gift.

I've learned that it helps to tell others about the person you've lost, like I'm doing here about my son. Sharing memories of them is healing, it keeps them alive. On Facebook I share photos and memories of both my wife and my son on their birthdays. A Jewish proverb says that we die twice, once when the body dies and again when your name is no longer spoken.



One of the things I learned in my grief journey is that poetry was the only language potent enough to penetrate the brain fog that froze my mind. I found Jan Richardson's "The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief" the most helpful of the many books I received. It's the one I send to friends who have experienced the death of their beloved.

I also learned that I needed friends to call me—it was virtually impossible for me to reach out. I was paralyzed, but needing human touch and voices. After each of my two major losses, I could sense my healing, my return to a normal state, when I began calling family and friends. Now I'm even able to call others when they are suffering a deep loss.

I turned a corner, came out of the darkest part of this second round of deep grief, in the last few weeks of December when I realized I was strong enough, had enough focus and will to commit to a year-long program of deep inner work focused on contemplative writing. I also committed to leading a second Enneagram Study Group because so many friends had asked and encouraged me to continue to share

my love of this system of self-awareness. Their responses are feeding me, as well as the joy that I'm getting from working on the Labyrinth.

Death and grief are an inevitable and an important part of life. I've learned that grief is a necessary life experience, a state of helplessness that takes us to our knees in recognition of how brief and precious life is. We have so little control; we can only thank the Creator for the gifts of life we have shared.

A wise person said that without death, life has no meaning. That moving balance of deep sorrow and deep joy continues to play itself out in my daily life. Returning to writing has brought some peace and fulfillment to these painful but essential life experiences.



Jeanne (center) with son, Jean Hubert, and wife, Kae Bates, at their wedding in 2013

Wedding photo by Gail Beck, photos on page 20 by Ray Carroll & on page 22 by Kae Bates



Suffering & Transformation

by Doug Yunker



September 29, 2021: St. Mark's Hospital, Salt Lake City, created a Hall of Hope honoring the critical care of their smallest & most vulnerable patients. It features poster-sized photographs of those patients now: Finley Merryweather, age 7, the grandson of Mike and Michele Hogan, holds a photo of himself born at 129 days' gestation. "We can't imagine life without him. Every day is a day of gratitude. He has transformed our lives with so much joy," says grandma 'Seashell,' the name he gave me.

Midwifing Butterflies

by Michele Hogan

I find myself as an observer of nature.

For thirty-four years as a teacher, I would open the doors of my classroom in August to prepare a ritual for new beginnings and transformation. First, I wrote each child's name on a list and placed it in my Bible, ready for my morning time of prayer. Then, with reverence for all life, I prepared the sacred jar and mindfully chose a small branch, grounding it in the jar so the branch of life soared heavenwards.

I attached the screened lid, and walked with purpose to the nearby park, forging through thistle and milkweed, searching for leaves already nibbled by caterpillars. I delighted in finding a perfect green and yellow one snacking, and tenderly placed it inside the glass orb, intending to midwife its survival. I returned to the milkweed patch every day, gathering food, opening the lid and spraying a fine mist of water into the incubator.

When the students arrived, they always watched in wonder as the caterpillar formed its chrysalis, surrounding itself with the dark cocoon where it would wait. . . and wait. . . while we also waited, without understanding the mechanics of transformation, without knowing whether its survival was even assured. Through this time, we kept faith. We hoped. Some of us prayed. All of us believed.



After a few weeks, our excitement rose again as the chrysalis turned transparent, revealing the hidden image of stained-glass wings beneath the wedding veil cocoon. In God's time, a perfect butterfly emerged, wet winged, awakened from its dreamless sleep.

The new butterfly waited in stillness on the branch, a stranger to itself, unaccustomed to wearing large wings. When we took the branch out to the fence, it flapped and flew off, free to join a kaleidoscope of butterflies doing what butterflies are created to do~ migrating, pollinating flowers, laying eggs, bringing messages of God's beauty to those who see them, and then dying into the mystery.

The emergence of a butterfly delights every child I have encountered. The transformation is a miracle~ the essence of what I believe the spiritual experience to be. In class, there were many times I set aside lesson plans to tend to God's lessons. Thomas Aquinas intuited a connection between spirituality and science. Butterfly Emergence Day at school was always an occasion of profound sharing and reverence for life and rebirth~ a reminder that inner and outer realities do indeed mirror one another.



A Farewell

Farewell to you
numbers 1 and 16,
top wisdom teeth
of my body temple

A failure of repetition
in dentition meant
no mates below and so
my dears, you had to go

I welcomed your slow sprouting,
sharp as bamboo,
last of the tooth flowers
marking childhood's end

Maturity: a mouthful

You promised the bite
of truth - forkfuls
of understanding
on arrival

Instead they winched
you away
before your time
to have a say

Your absence altered me

Indeed I have felt light-
headed since,
caught short in the count
of life's blessings

here in the chasm
between what is lost
and the grander
expanse of what's not

by Linnea Harper

Reading Ernest Hemingway

I'm sitting in a sunlit room, reading Ernest Hemingway. The phone rings— John is in Newport, doing something at the court house, buying rabbit eye blueberries at the farmers market. I say stop by on your way back home, which is what he was hoping to do— though it would have been ok, either way (I know that too) so I go out and walk in the wet grass, around the patio, around the house, and I see Scott and Ian standing there, so I go over and talk to them until John arrives, which doesn't take long, and he joins us for a while, talking about the library book sale and certain poems about summer that we all like. Then Scott has to go, and Ian tells a story before he leaves, and then John and I sit on the French Bench in the sun, eating blueberries, and then John leaves and I'm back in the sunlit room reading *The Sun Also Rises*.

by Doug Yunker



Embroidered Flowering Vine

by Hazel Hebert

The Baptism of Iris Garrett at St. Luke by the Sea
August 22, 2021

Parents: Matt & Heather Garret

Sisters: Eleanor & Mary Jo

Sponsors: Jack Garrett Jr. (uncle) & Nancy Glebov (great aunt)





FAREWELLS

by Jeanne St John & the Collective Memory-Keeper of Our Parishes

St. Luke's & St. Stephen's have lost some long-time and well-loved members on this earthly plane, for whom we pray that they are now "resting in peace". We wanted to acknowledge their loss, their service, and their connection to our parishes, where they continue to be part of our very extended family. An old Jewish tradition says that people die twice—once when the body dies and again when no one speaks their name. It's good to speak their names and remember their beings.

Remembering Marge & Jack Howell



Margaret "Marge" Howell died March 22, 2021, in Woodland, CA. She was born July 6, 1928, in Los Angeles, CA, and grew up there with her parents and two sisters Carol and Kay. In 1951, she married Jack Howell and they raised four children. In 1989, Jack retired from the State of California and they moved to the Central Coast of Oregon where they designed and built their own home. They loved living in Oregon and all their friends there. Jack died in Oregon in 2011. In 2013, Marge moved back to California to be close to family and better medical facilities. She lived in the Sacramento area for the rest of her life. She is survived by sons Steve, Lee, and Pat Howell, and daughter Jeanine McDonald.

Friends at St. Luke's have fond memories of both Marge & Jack. Elizabeth remembers Marge as one of the first people she met at St. Luke's. "She usually sat behind me and one Sunday she asked if I was a 'cradle' Episcopalian. I said yes and asked why she had asked. She said, "Because you kneel at all the appropriate times." Marge was very kind and had the sweetest smile.

Bunny wrote, "I loved Marge. I didn't know Jack and he didn't attend services but waited for her faithfully in the parish hall until the service was over, then was there for the coffee hour where he sat with the men and visited.

"I first met Marge when she chose me to be one of the servers at a church sponsored spaghetti dinner because I was 'perky'. Nobody ever said that of me so it's in my memories.

"I was there when Jack was dying, then Marge made the difficult choice to sell her beloved home and move to California. I kept in touch for a long time with phone calls and long letters but then there was an absence and I heard that she had died. Unfortunately this has happened to too many of the people I met when I started coming to St. Luke's in 1997, but this is life."

Karin remembers sharing Tai Chi with Marge. "The serenity of the moves helped center us during difficult times. She, with the failing health of her husband, and me, with a mastectomy and chemotherapy, plus caring for my failing mother and mother-in-law. We also shared membership in the local Red Hat group~ in fact she left me her red hat when she moved to California. Marge was a lovely and positive soul."

Kempton remembers Jack with a great story. "In my garage is a pair of handmade, wooden ramps, marked Jack's Ramps, that I use for getting my pickup in the air to change my oil. It gives me a real sense of accomplishment at 83 to be able to change the oil and filter on that old pickup.

"Here's the backstory. Jack was not entirely comfortable with staying in the pew for the entire liturgy. He sat out in the social room and drank coffee. I often slipped out after communion, but before the last hymn and talked to Jack about what, in another universe, we used to call 'guy stuff.'



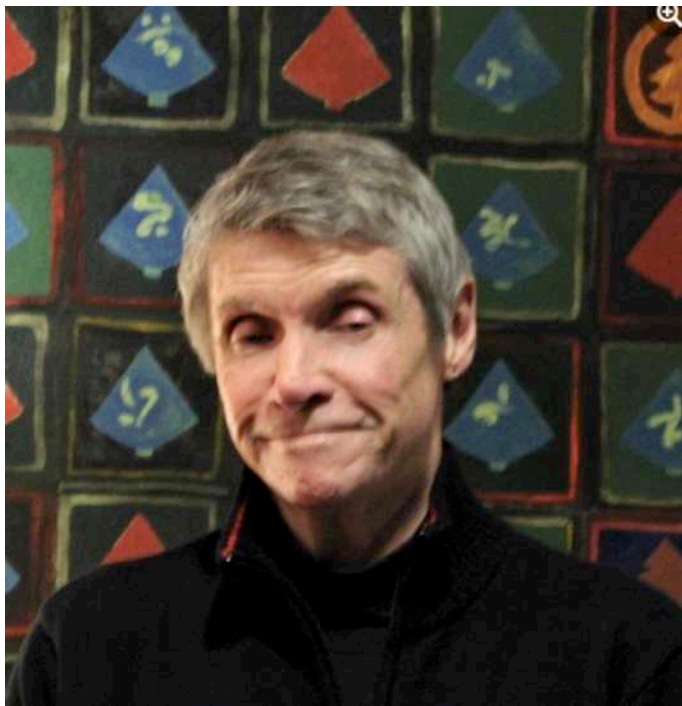
“We talked a lot about oil products, the various theories as to whether or not calendar or mileage was the chief determination for changing oil and the various brands of filters. Toward the end of their time here I paid them a visit and was amazed at Jack’s workshop and tools. I learned that he actually built the house (at least in part) and knew just about everything I wish that I knew about cars and houses.



“When he showed me his crafted ramps, made ingeniously out of scrap wood, I admired them. He said, ‘You know, my days of changing oil on my cars are just about over. We talked a lot about this every Sunday and I want you to have this set of ramps.’

“I was deeply moved. In fact, truth be told, I still change the oil on my pickup just to use the ‘Jack Ramps.’ We bonded over something very basic and, I suppose, somewhat silly to most people, but Hey! I miss both of those folks and still get a little lump every time I pull out Jack’s ramps.”

Farewell to Our Beloved Organist Eric Simpson



Eric Carter Simpson, 73, of Neotsu, Oregon, passed away on Sunday, October 10, 2021. He was a prominent force at St. James Santiago Church in Lincoln City, having served many years as parishioner, organist and music director. He was also the organist and choirmaster at St. Stephen's Church in Newport and St. Luke's in Waldport.

Eric was a beloved music teacher and staff colleague at St. James Santiago School, and before that at Neskowin Valley School. He

accompanied many musical and dramatic productions and mentored countless children as a private piano teacher.

Born in Wenonah, New Jersey, the son of Ernest and Edna Simpson, Eric was devoted to his family, taking his stepmother Mildred on annual vacations until the end of her life. His family moved to Virginia, where Eric attended high school and then college at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. He spent summers waiting tables for seaside tourists in Cape May, NJ, and Virginia Beach. While working for The Music Box Company in Boston, he was transferred to manage its store on Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco; he served as organist and parish administrator for the San Francisco Church of the Advent and organist at St. Aidan's Episcopal. He was also active in PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support), taking care of the pets of people with AIDS who could no longer care for them. Eric and his husband Scott were named Lincoln City's "Couple of the Year" in 2008 for their many contributions to community service. They initiated the St. James Church Community Meal Program, which continues to serve thousands of hot meals to the hungry each year.

He was a kind and generous person who made powerful contributions to his communities; his love for humankind embraced many forms of service to others. His friendship and stewardship knew no boundaries. Eric's countless friends across the country will remember him for his hospitality and his unstinting support of those who knew him. Eric leaves behind his husband of 29 years, Scott Sommerfeld. He will be dearly missed.

Previously a St. Stephen's parishioner & now at St. Luke's, Dawn Pavitt-Ryan remembered him from both churches. "He had the interesting role of playing music to soothe our souls at funerals and sad times but also to cheer us on and inspire us at holidays and celebrations. He was in the background of virtually everything that happened at church for many years.

"I also enjoyed his quiet humor, his smile and funny comments. I really noticed and felt his loss when he stopped attending our services and events."

Bunny Wright is still looking for the photo of St. Luke's folks helping clean up Eric & Scott's yard during his first round of chemo. They were so grateful and it was a memorable day for the helpers. She also remembers, "Eric was our organist soon after I joined St. Luke's and was a master, too good for us, but inspirational. We were so lucky! I was ushering then and got to visit with him often. He was such a kind, gentle man and I've missed him since he left."

Jeanne St John remembers Eric with special fondness for the beauty and power of his music, which caused her and Kae to move to the back pew to better experience the reverberation of the bass notes. They also loved his sense of humor that included this pair of flamingos decorated to celebrate Pride month, which he proudly displayed on St. Luke's organ.



The Rev. Susan Church, previous Vicar of St. Luke & St. Stephen, posted on Facebook this message from Bishop Steven Charleston, which reminded her of Eric:

"Your song will not end. The kindness you have shown. The wisdom you have shared. The love you have given. None of that will end. It will go on and on, passed like an heirloom of faith from person to person, not only of your own family, but between the countless others you have known, cared for, worked with, prayed for and respected. You have made music with your life. You have made a witness. The harmony you have embodied and the hope you have embraced will sing on after you, sing on into generations yet to come. Your vision will live in many hearts until one joyous day it joins the chorus of life that began when Spirit first started to sing."

Go in peace, dear Eric, go in peace.





Red Star

by Hazel Hebert