

St. Jude the Apostle Episcopal Church in Cupertino

20920 McClellan Rd., Cupertino, CA 95014 (408) 252-4166

St. Jude's is a spiritual oasis where lives are transformed.

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the **View** from the orchard

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Pruning Enables Us to Keep Growing Abundantly

Sarah+ and Kathy Yates, Senior Warden

John 15:1-5, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower who removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing...."



The idea of 'pruning' has come up a number of times in the last several weeks. I'm not the best gardener, yet I enjoy it, and am learning how to improve.

Pruning is one skill I've particularly been pondering in recent years. First, I've learned that the need for pruning arises from growth. A growing plants pushes out a lot of new shoots. Not all are needed, or even productive. Pruning is a necessary practice for growing plants to flourish. Secondly, I've learned that it's not always easy to decide how to prune. With my sprouting lime tree, it's hard to trim back good-looking branches with bright green leaves and promising blossoms. Yet, for the sake of the plant, I have to prune to focus the plant's energy on growth that produces a strong structure; I have to discern which branches best strengthen the overall tree.

In verse 5, Jesus tells us the smart vinegrower intentionally tends to the vine—not just the branches.

As followers of Jesus in 21st Century Silicon Valley, we want our parish to be a place of transformation—a place where we abide in Christ and Christ abides in us. Our relationship with the divine is the central vine.

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As a congregation, the ministries and activities we sustain are like the branches of our parish “vine”. We’ve grown and sustained many branches over the years – including some new ones which “took,” some naturally died off, and some that were pruned to help us focus our energies elsewhere. Below is just a sampling of parish initiatives that come to mind (not all of which are currently active);

- Community Forums
- DeAnza Cafe
- FaithFull Families
- Food Trucks
- GOTS (Expanded and diversified small groups)
- Habitat
- Haiti partnership covenant
- Jazz Vespers
- July 4th celebration
- MOTS and BOTS (Music & Brass of the Spirit)
- PACT, LOC (Local Operating Committee) and other PACT activities)
- Rebuilding Together
- Safe Car Park
- St. Jude’s Outreach movie night
- Service Worship Sunday
- Taizé Prayers
- The Mission Covenant process and task forces
- Vacation Bible Camp

We are a faith community amidst an abundance of blooming branches that want to keep growing! As springtime takes hold of our yards and our awareness, there is wisdom in stepping back to consider which branches are truly strengthening the structure of our parish “vine”. What do you think? This is a conversation for our whole faith community. Here are a few questions to encourage your participation in this emerging conversation:

- Pruning can sound intimidating or exciting. Where in your life – personally or at St. Jude’s have you experienced healthy ‘pruning’ How was that experience for you?
- Pruning includes tending the vine. Of the many ‘branch’ activities we do at St. Jude’s, which activity most directly sustains our ‘vine’? Are there any activities we could cut back to reduce the ‘weight’ or to contribute to the health of the overall ‘vine’?

- Pruning enables growth to beget new growth. Are there any branches that are becoming barren or could be pared back to enable more ‘fruit’? Can you imagine how ‘pruning’ could lead to more growth St. Jude’s? What might new, even more abundant ‘fruit’ look like?

May we continue tending to our life-giving vine, and to the wise “pruning of branches” to enable us to grow abundantly! With God’s help and the support of one another, amen.

Bishop Mary will be at St. Jude’s on April 29

Bishop Mary will be with us on April 29 for a joint worship service at 9:15am, including confirmations and a reception, and again for our October Harvest Dinner. Please join in praying for her as she prepares to visit and for those who have discerned to take this next step in their faith journey: Confirmation -- Gabe A., Tony C., Brianna Stephanie F., Jackie, and William M.; and Received -- Mark L. Below is the Bishop’s Easter message to the Diocese.

SAVE THE DATE: Bishop Mary will be with us for our annual Harvest Dinner on Friday, October 12th!

Easter Message: Jesus is Coming Back, and Boy is He Mad!

Bishop Mary



In Mark’s resurrection narrative, women-followers Mary, Mary and Salome go to anoint the dead body of Jesus. Upon entering the tomb, they find a man (Jesus, perhaps?) seated there. He instructs them to go and tell the “disciples and Peter” (yes, even that denier, Peter!) that they will meet up in Galilee. The women run away in fear and “tell nothing to anyone.”

Maybe the women thought Jesus had come back to have his revenge. “Jesus is coming back and he is mad!” ... or so the saying goes. Betrayal, persecution, abandonment and execution; conventional experience dictates an equally violent response to settle the score. How can there be any

other way to make things right but to balance the evil with evenness? Maybe the resurrection was terrifying because the disciples feared they would be hunted down.

One of the powerful qualities inherent in resurrection is forgiveness; the release of one's wrongdoing and the cessation of the madness of trying to even the score, make things settle out, eye-to-eye, tooth-to-tooth.

Jesus' re-entry into the lives of the disciples – those who apparently loved him but left him – makes them the first to hear the message of resurrection. This in itself is a generous act. Maybe they could believe all those things he said and did for others. This confusing, counter-intuitive offering could be for them too. And if the disciples could receive forgiveness, they could also offer it, witnessing to the power of resurrection expressed in the power of forgiveness.

I do not think Jesus' resurrection suggests that the human failing that got him to the cross did not matter; rather, resurrection conveys that the brokenness of humanity does not matter *most*. In the eyes of God, our failing is never more powerful than God's forgiveness. We are invited to live from there, making up the resurrected body of Christ, a witness to the power of the practice of forgiveness.

We tend to stop reflecting on the power of resurrection after Easter Day. I invite you to reflect on forgiveness in the whole season of Easter. Where do you need to be forgiven? To forgive? What difference does it make to your experience of life? How does it strengthen your spiritual identity as a Christian? How does it bring healing? The Gospel of Jesus Christ offers the concept that forgiveness provides a strategic way to heal the world. How might we live strategically this core concept of our faith?

May we be a living witness to the power of the resurrection. The Lord is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!



The replacement Heritage Tree

Update: Classroom Courtyard Project

Jennifer Stern, Vance Nau, and Tom Dyer

After a long winter of updating our drawings to meet City requirements for engineering, ADA compliance, sanitation, and all sorts of other minor details, we have finally resubmitted our permit request for approval. We are hopeful that we have submitted a very solid package and will receive our permit soon.

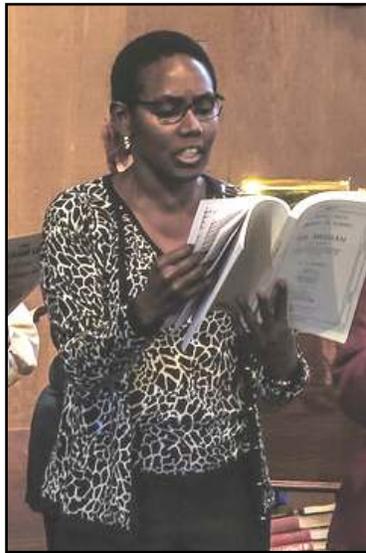
The best outlook is that we will start construction in May! The great news is that the work will proceed quickly once we get underway. We will provide updates through our weekly parish communications as we firm up schedules, including when we might schedule some volunteer opportunities for those who want to get their hands dirty.

Thank you for your patience as we have worked through the process! And of course, thank you for your financial support that will enable the project!

With Deep Gratitude

Juneann McDonald

It is with deep gratitude to the clergy and congregation of St. Jude's that I say "See you later" as I move to my new home in Smyrna, Georgia on April 25. The purpose of my move is to be closer to family whom I've been away from during my career in high tech, and to explore new career options in mentorship and coaching of college seniors and young professionals. The people of St. Jude's have truly been my family while away from my biological family.



I started attending St. Jude's 32 years ago and was initially drawn here by the welcoming congregants and my familiarity with the liturgy. I had a sound religious foundation, but St. Jude's sermons and the invitation to serve here in different ministries led to a deepening of my faith and a chance to put my faith in action in a service community. I will truly miss all my St. Jude's friends whom I met while in the choir, on the vestry, as a counter and while working on the Financial Promise Seasons, Demographics and Deepening our Welcome groups. I will also miss the Wednesday noon services and discussion with friends made at the brown bag lunches.

I wish St. Jude's the best in touching more lives and deepening the faith of newcomers going forward. This is a special place which I will revisit whenever I visit the Bay Area. Please contact me by cell phone if you visit the metro Atlanta area.



Gratitude for and Goodbyes to Dave+

As we began working through the details of Wilma's sabbatical coverage, it became clear that Dave's family and liturgical needs have changed, and he has decided it is time to wrap up his ministry with us and turn his full attention to Sacramento/Folsom. Our parish has both enjoyed and benefited from Dave's presence amongst us, and we have seen his wonderful ministry with the youth and youth mentors. In Dave's words,

"As you might remember, I have been splitting my time between St. Jude's and Trinity Folsom. I see in each Eucharist our expression of praise, petitions and thanksgivings to God, a reflection of a unique community. Celebrating the Eucharist, which I joyfully did for my first time at St. Jude's, is moving and challenging. Changing between two different parish contexts has proved to be too much, as I gain skills as a new priest. This, combined with increased family duties in Sacramento, leaves me unable to complete my time through June at St. Jude's.

In my time supporting mentors and youth, we've played silly games while deepening our Christian faith. We laid on the labyrinth and talked about the Lord's prayer, about how kinda crazy it is that Jesus tells us to call God "Daddy" when praying. We looked at Jesus and scripture: God revealed in the Gospels. Just like gathering mini-marshmallows into ice cream cones, wrestling with scripture written from unique perspectives challenges and

offers new insights. One exercise had us talking about how we sometimes put up our own barriers. Through each gathering, I've been impressed in the leadership of the youth mentors; Karen, Mark, Lauren, Steven and John. They truly find joy in each and every kid.

In the past few months, it has been a joy to be with at St. Jude's on a part-time basis as deacon and priest. Thank you."



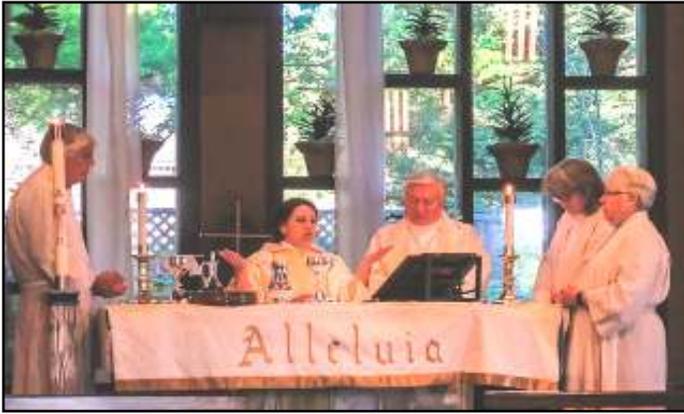
Dave's last day with us will be April 22, 10:30am. He will share goodbyes with the youth and mentors over youth group lunch. We are sad to see Dave go, yet grateful for the ministry he has given us.



Gratitudes: We give special thanks for...

- The many many leaders and volunteers of all ages who gave generously of their time and talents to create our shared worship space through Holy Week and Easter!
- Newcomer Hosts who welcome visitors and newcomers, listen to their stories ("what drew you here today?"), accompany them to coffee hour, and introduce them to others as a way of instilling an immediate sense of welcome and inclusion.
- Jani Wild's ordination to the priesthood on April 7th!
- Cheryl Franke and Peter Corless who were married on April 7th!
- Christine Stark and her wonderful curation of the Narthex Mission Covenant display board and care in taking and posting exciting pictures of our shared life and ministry together.
- Kathy Lynch, Pattie Rotondo, and Amanda Williams for coordinating a special Women's Weekend.

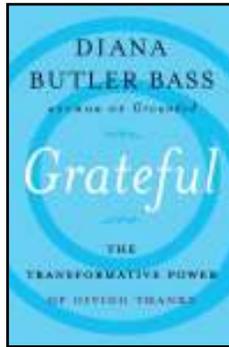




Library Highlight: Diana Butler Bass

Lianne Card

Our library committee often selects books when we hear an interesting speaker. Susan Witherspoon recently attended the Westar Conference in Santa Rosa and was impressed with the keynote address by Diana Butler Bass. She spoke on the theme of her just-released title, *Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks*. We have added this and her previous book, *Grounded*, to our collection.

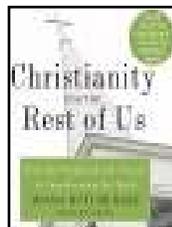
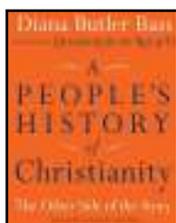
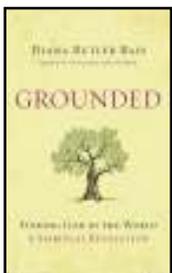


Grateful is Diana Butler Bass' tenth book. As an independent scholar she explores issues concerning American religion, spirituality, and culture. For more than two decades, Diana has been tracking trends and changes in how Americans believe and worship. She has covered seismic shifts within institutional religion that are still underway.

In *Grateful*, Diana Butler Bass makes the case that gratitude can expand from a personal "I" to a communal "We." When cultivated, it can build an ethical foundation for behavior that can transform families, communities and ultimately our wider society.

The St. Jude's Library collection also features the following other titles by Diana Butler Bass:

- *Grounded: Finding God in the World; A Spiritual Revolution*, 2016. This title addresses the question "Where is God?" She explores how God's presence can also be found in belonging, home and neighborhood.
- *A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story*, 2009. This is an ambitious and wide ranging history of Christian faith through five eras.
- *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How The Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith*, 2006. In this title Bass debunks the idea that mainline neighborhood churches are dying. She shows that renewal is underway in local communities where affirming prayer, pastoral commitment and imagination are making congregational life relevant "just around the corner."



Practice Resurrection!

Wilma+

Warm greetings! What a glorious and joyful Easter it was! Thank you to all who made it so special. Someone said to me, we should do this every Sunday! As in, experience the joy, the love, the energy of Easter. (B)ring those bells! Alleluia!



Thanks be to God that Easter is not just one Sunday, but a longer season of fifty days/seven Sundays to take in the enormity of what the resurrection can mean in our lives and our world. In my Easter Sunday sermon, I invited people to 'practice resurrection', from a poem by Wendell Berry. I asked, "What does it mean to practice resurrection in a world that knows mostly crucifixion, whether it's the daily news, or in the tears and lives of our loved ones or ourselves?" Michael Usey says, "We must think of new ways to bring the power of Easter to this world, we must act it out daily. We must become conduits of the love and energy of the Almighty God."

"Practicing resurrection means living and loving like Jesus. Praying for our enemies, whether corporate like hatemongers, or personal like difficult neighbors or family members. Taking up courage to ask another person to talk and clear the deck about a problem between us, creating peace. Offering our money, our time, our possessions with extravagant generosity even when we don't feel like it. Putting the power of Easter into our daily lives and being transformed!"

In a couple of weeks' time we will celebrate the coming of the Spirit and Pentecost. The moment that definitively changed the disciples' lives – they changed from a frightened huddle of fear to powerful preachers that proclaimed in word and deed that the resurrection had transformed them, and could transform others.

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This year I will not be with you to celebrate Pentecost, or most of the summer. As most of you know, I leave on sabbatical on May 1st, for a time of refreshment and renewal, through retreats and reconnecting with family and friends in Europe and South Africa. I will appreciate your prayers, and I will be praying for all of you.

The newly ordained priest Jani Wild, whose joyful ordination I attended this month, will be with us on Sundays at St Jude's from May through July, and will offer us 14 hours per week of her ministry and gifts, pastoral, preaching and celebrating eucharist, helping Sarah with the youth and family ministry, and more.

I am excited to see what the summer holds for St Jude's, as you also slow down somewhat, enjoy our annual community activities, ponder what direction the Spirit is leading us, live into what it means to practice resurrection, and invite the Spirit to work amongst us to transform us into the beautiful body of Christ that God intends us to be.



Vestry Notes

Kathy Yates, Senior Warden

Wilma opened the vestry meeting with a prayer and reflection based on John 1-5, a reading about Jesus as the vine and the church as the branches of a flourishing vineyard. This is the second time we've reflected on this reading, and the depth of meaning is emerging more fully. Please see the article that Sarah and I co-wrote about what the idea of pruning brings to mind for us. We will be hearing this reading again later this month when the Bishop comes for confirmation. I encourage you to read the article from Sarah and me and allow the questions at the end to help guide you in thinking about the

role of pruning in maintaining a healthy vineyard. Vestry then approved March meeting minutes, heard updates from the Operations and Finance committees, and approved a resolution on behalf of Altar Guild to purchase new vestment sets for clergy.

We then discussed the positive parish feedback we've received about the new collects and prayers we've used during Lent from throughout the Anglican community. Clergy plans to continue using these new elements, and to begin using variations of the creed (affirmation of faith), in rotation with the traditional Nicene creed. We encourage your continued feedback about these new elements and voices in our liturgy.

The last item of business was a continuation of our discussion about St Jude's ministries and how they can be shaped to support our mission covenant goals and allow us to abide in Christ as Christ abides in us.

We closed with a prayer for Wilma, that she will have a safe and restorative sabbatical, and remain in our hearts in her absence.

Trying On New Lenten Liturgy Clergy

Thank you for accepting the Bishop's invitation to "try on" liturgical elements from around the world during Lent.



Wilma invited your feedback along the way, as it helps us discern opportunities to weave in language and practices that expand our experience of God and create a sense of wonder in worship. The feedback we received was largely affirming and encouraging. Here are the comments we received (in no certain order):

- *Appreciated the confession from the Church of South India, the Eucharistic Prayers from the Anglican Church of Canada and Church of*

South India, and the post-communion prayers from the Church of England and Church of South India.

- *What are “Prayers for an Inclusive Church”?*
- *Why we didn't try a different version of the Lord's Prayer, like the one in the New Zealand prayer book?*
- *I like removing masculine pronouns where possible, and 'Lord' where possible.*
- *In the Great Litany, if saying the name of the President and praying for him by name creates trauma, we shouldn't name the others [e.g., Brown, Paul] either. Naming some but not others felt partisan, even if it was an honest mistake.*
- *From Eucharistic Prayer from the Anglican Church of Canada, Good! — whole sections starting with, "Eternal God Source of all being.... and with the poor, the outcast, and the oppressed..." and Great! — the whole section starting with "Pour out your Spirit..."*
- *Please resume use of 'Jesus the Christ,' and since we are using non-gender specific language, can we leave out the word 'Lord' as in "our Lord Jesus Christ"?*
- *I like the idea of using alternative liturgies. Perhaps my favorite was from the Anglican Church of Canada. None of the liturgies used so far are in any way radical. I would love to see us use some of the spirit of David Galston's ideas from Embracing the Human Jesus.*
- *I missed the traditional readings for the Easter Vigil.*
- *We loved the alternative readings for the Easter Vigil, except the first reading: Why 'he' and 'man'? What about 'woman'?*
- *The new liturgy is bringing me joy this Lent. I love it! More! For example, from Eucharistic Prayer from the Anglican Church of Canada, the whole sections starting with, "Loving and Holy One..." and "Pour out your Spirit..."*

different versions of the creed (affirmation of faith) from around the Anglican Communion and other sources, (affirmation of faith), in rotation with the traditional Nicene creed. This is exciting! We encourage your continued feedback about these new elements and voices in our liturgy.

During Wilma's sabbatical, the vestry decided that we will continue to use the new elements that have been most meaningful to people, along with the regular ones with which we are familiar. Bishop Mary has given us permission to also begin using