



# The Abbey

*August-September 2018*

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*“For with God, nothing shall be impossible.”*

*Luke 1:3, AKJV*

**S**t is my greatest belief that God is continually beckoning us to join in the divine mission of reconciliation within our communities, a reconciliation that includes not only humans but also all of creation.

At present, creation is groaning and moaning for relief in this nation, as well as in nations near and far. There is a thirst for that which is good, true, just and loving. There is a thirst for unity and fellowship. There is a thirst to be known, and whether we identify it or not, there is a thirst for the Holy.

Therefore, this is the time of the Church, especially for the community of St. Benedict. As we nurture ourselves and our relationships through study of Scripture, through worship of God, through the sharing of the Eucharistic meal and its transformative mystery, we must take what we have been given and share it with people in the wider community. We are to be the feet, hands and bodies of Jesus, the Christ. We are to be his witnesses.

Needless to say, for some of us if not all, an outward movement to encounter the unplanned is a scary endeavor, because it brings uncertainty, loss of control and unseen direction. It makes us accountable in distinguishing between when we must pray and discern our next steps and when we must pray and move our feet in hope. It is this hope and belief in YHWH’s promise of always being with us, as well as the promise of restoration, reconciliation, and peace that will lead us into the unknown. It is this hope and belief that will give us courage. Like the people of Israel, who were beset by chaos, doubt and disobedience while stepping into a future that rested on an unseen promise, we must do the same.

As we go forward in this new church season, let us hold onto and believe the words of Jesus, “For with God, nothing shall be impossible.” May we embrace the unknown and go forth.

*In Christ, Mother Barbara+*

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### ***OPEN-DOOR POLICY***

*Want to come and chat? Mother Barbara has an open-door policy. Feel free to visit and have a conversation.*



## **What is a Deacon?**

Let's begin with a definition: a deacon is a member of the diaconate, an office in the Christian Church that is generally associated with service (in the world) but which varies among theological and denominational traditions.

In the Episcopal Church, becoming a deacon usually requires intense study in Episcopal Church doctrine, the Bible, communication, relationships, safe church and diaconal service within the confines of the church but more importantly “in the world beyond the doors of the church.”

When studies are completed, and the church hierarchy gives the OK, the individual is formally apostolically ordained by the diocesan bishop. Once ordained, the deacon can then be assigned to a parish within the diocese. That assignment under the direction of the church's rector is not an administrative position. A deacon can be assigned various duties at the request of the priest but not dealing with day-to-day church business.

Now let's add a bit of history. The first deacon of the Christian church was Stephen. His story can be found in Acts, Chapter 6. Stephen was described as a “man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.” The deacons of our diocese have a variety of gifts and a variety of ways that each serves in his or her community and beyond. Some work within charities that help make the lives of the poor and homeless less stressful, some work in missions. Others work with street people, at food banks, in hospitals and hospices. The ways in which a deacon can serve are endless. Wherever there is a need in society, you might just come across a deacon!

Blessings to all, *Deacon Dee*

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## **PASTORAL CARE**

As a nation and a people, we are experiencing distressing times. Events can take a toll on our emotional, spiritual and physical health. If anyone needs to talk and/or pray, please contact Mother Barbara and Deacon Dee. We can talk and/or pray after service on Sunday, or over tea and coffee during the week. Feel free to contact us at [motherbarbara@st.benedict.ws](mailto:motherbarbara@st.benedict.ws)

## **A Message from Rose Cicero, *Postulant for the Diaconate***



I am very happy to be at St. Benedict for my field education as I prepare to be a deacon in the Episcopal Church. I have been a postulant for the diaconate since April 1, 2017. The diaconal formation program in the Diocese of Chicago is individualized based upon the educational background and previous experiences of the postulant. My formation program has involved course work, various trainings, and selected readings which I discuss with my reader. One very important aspect of the formation program is the field education experience. A postulant is sent to a parish for 9 months to a year in order to have a practical experience of the diaconate.

I feel fortunate to be here at St. Benedict with you for my practical training. It has been an honor to serve in liturgy as part of my training and I am excited about learning even more as my time with you continues until next Spring.

I am looking forward to experiencing the new church calendar as planning is already underway for Sunday School, Adult Education, and Confirmation. As a retired educator, I have interest in contributing to these ministries. I have always enjoyed the blessing of the backpacks during this time of year and the students' anticipation of a new school year. I am eager to experience the upcoming Ministry Fair where all of St. Benedict's ministries will be on display. I am particularly looking forward to the Advent and Easter seasons, which are two of my favorite times of year.

I thank you for your kind hospitality and your welcoming spirit. I feel blessed to be able to journey with you during these months.

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*"To be fully alive, fully human, and completely awake is to be continually thrown out of the nest."*

— [Pema Chödrön](#)



## **Jeanette Cruz-Miranda**

I have been a member with *The Church of St. Benedict* since 2015. In the 80s, I was fortunate enough to have three beautiful, smart and healthy children, Max, Robert and Micaelia Vallejo. Their beautiful and sweet faces were every reason for me to move forward in my incredibly crazy life. They were also my biggest source of confidence and happiness.

Everything I did, I did for them.

In the late 90s, I found my very first job at a law firm as a file clerk. I remember celebrating with my children when I received my first, very small check, for we were no longer living on welfare. Another reason to celebrate was that I came from many generations of family members who were welfare recipients, and I had broken that tradition. Now my children would no longer be financially raised by government funding and would know that hard work could pay off. I have never depended on anyone and I wanted to make sure that my children would be independent as well. Today, as adults, they are living independently.

A few months after getting a new job, I met my wife, Rosa Miranda. She helped us out so much which brought another change in my life, because I had never allowed anyone to help us. She pushed me to challenge myself and to be a better person. I also challenged her. Coming into a relationship with three young children wasn't easy. We vacationed with the children as often as possible, creating great memories. Eventually, Rosa and I bought our first house, a first for both of us. In 2010 we received the greatest gift of all, a grandson, Aidan Vallejo. A few months later Max, Jr. Vallejo arrived. Later we witnessed our grandson and granddaughter Jordan and Lilliana Vallejo's birth. Life was good. At this time in our lives, we are appreciating all the good times with family and friends, but we will always miss our son, Max.

I give thanks to the Church of St. Benedict for allowing me to participate in the Morningstar Mission and refugee programs because other than cooking and planning events, I love helping people in need. These engagements have become a part of my good memories along with those who have always made me feel like I belong.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart!



*"...be prepared in season and out of season..." 2 Timothy 4:2*

This year, all formation classes will be lectionary-based. This means that everyone will follow and study the same readings during the church season. If you have never attended a class or if you have stopped attending an education class at St. Benedict, then please consider attending this year. Offerings for adults and children are listed below.

## **ONGOING SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT FOR ADULTS**

**Every Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m.**, there will be an opportunity to explore our faith journey together. There will be three areas of focus:

- A literary and theological study of the Old Testament,
- Exploring the meaning of the Sunday Scriptures for our lives and the larger community as we live in the day-to-day.
- Ongoing topics of Grace and Race (see below)

Classes begin on Sunday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, in the Couch Room. For more information, contact Linda LeDeur at [info@stbenedict.ws](mailto:info@stbenedict.ws).

### **Grace & Race**

*Navigate the "Pathway to Reconciliation" using the Congregational Study Guide for the Legacy of Slavery Task Force Report, sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago's Antiracism Commission*

Bishop Lee has enthusiastically charged each congregation to fulfill the convention resolution inviting us to spend the next year in conversation "on the impact of the legacy of slavery, segregation and discrimination in its local context" based on the Legacy of Slavery Taskforce Report. Several congregations have begun and even completed the

study already this year. The Pathway to Reconciliation is a congregational study guide of the Legacy of Slavery Taskforce Report. We will use the study guide to generate informative, meaningful, faithful and redemptive transformations on the Pathway to Reconciliation. A pathway through the past and present to a future of reconciliation and our faith filled vision of the beloved community.

This will be a 6-session process conducted during the Fall Sunday adult forums over a couple of months. Please join for all 6 sessions, if possible or come to as many as you can.

For more info please contact Donna Williams (630)632-1670. For an advanced copy of the Legacy of Slavery Task Force Report <https://www.episcopalchicago.org/our-stories/2017/02/08/report-legacy-slavery-diocese-chicago>

**Bible Study, Wednesday Evenings, September 5<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.** *Short Stories by Jesus* by Amy-Jill Levin. We will be exploring the context and import of these stories when Jesus walked the earth, and how they speak to us now. This is a six-week exploration facilitated by Ruan Wright. All are welcome to attend. Invite a friend!

## CHILDREN'S FORMATION

### School Bells Are Chiming

Summer seems to fly past too, too fast. Here we are in August and the start of school is just days away. That includes Sunday School.



St. Benedict's Sunday School sessions for kids start on Sunday, August 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:30, following the Holy Eucharist. We'll follow the same schedule as last year, meeting for an hour on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month.



Ruth Denofrio will gather third graders and younger children for another fun and interesting year of Holy Moly. Beth Erickson and Stephen Erickson will guide the older kids through a new curriculum, **Living the Good News (LTGN)**. Using ideas and material especially designed for fourth through eighth graders, the students will be invited to dive deeper into the lessons used in our weekly worship services. LTGN is published by the Church Publishing Company, the official publisher of worship materials and resources for The Episcopal Church.



One of the key things making Saint Benedict's Sunday School program successful is a wealth of helpful and caring classroom assistants. There's always room for more, especially for those who don't have school-age kids in their frequent lives. The kids are a delight. And it's an opportunity to share from your experiences, as they share their experiences with you. Check the narthex table for a sign-up sheet or contact Beth Erickson [e\\_squared67@yahoo.com](mailto:e_squared67@yahoo.com).

## **Holy Moly**

Holy Moly is the Sunday School program for children ages 4 to 8. It is based upon a curriculum published by Augsburg Press. Each session focuses on one Bible story. The lesson includes reading the story, watching a video of the story and doing a related craft to reinforce the story. This coming year the lessons will be Old Testament stories including the Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah, Baby Moses, Daniel and Jonah among others.

Holy Moly is taught by Ruth Denofrio with a rotating group of parent assistants. The class meets the second and fourth Sunday of the month in the classroom in the green hallway across from the Parish Hall.

If you would like more information, please contact Ruth Denofrio or the main office at [info@stbenedict.ws](mailto:info@stbenedict.ws).

## **Blessing The Backpacks: Starting A New Year**

It takes a lot of people to make a successful school year: students, yes; teachers, of course; teaching assistants, too. Yet a school business can't function without a legion of support personnel: food service, custodians, librarians, nurses, early childhood specialists, bus drivers, building secretaries, etc., etc., etc. And, of course, we can't forget principals, central administrators, even superintendents – they're needed too.



On Sunday, August 12th, the congregation at St. Benedict will recognize all the people who make schools work by offering a blessing of backpacks, pens, pencils, books – bring any and all of the things the educated and educators find essential to their daily work. Let's get the 2018-2019 school year off to a grace-filled start.

## **HAPPENINGS AT ST. BENEDICT**

### August

Tuesday, August 7 – Annual Neighborhood Watch Meeting, 6 p.m.

Sunday, August 12 - Blessing of the Backpacks

Sunday, August 26 - Sunday School Begins

School Year Kickoff, potluck provided by Jill Crisman

### September

Sunday, September 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> – Ministry Fair

Sunday, September 23 - Outdoor Eucharist and BBQ

Sunday, September 30<sup>th</sup> - Confirmation Begins

Adult Spiritual Enrichment begins, Couch Room



## **Coffee Hosts**

Sharing fellowship after Sunday morning service is a joyful experience. It's a time that we eat and laugh together while providing a welcoming space for visitors.

Hosting Coffee Hour may seem daunting but need not be complicated or expensive! Sign up in the Narthex, and if you need help in planning your turn at hosting contact Laura Keyser: [LauraBlakeKeyser@gmail.com](mailto:LauraBlakeKeyser@gmail.com)

## **Book Nook**

Did you know that St. Benedict has its own "Little Free Library"? Located in the back corner of the Parish Hall is a bookshelf bursting with books of all kinds: History, Children's books, Novels...Feel free to take, borrow, or leave a book and enjoy!

## **Bolingbrook Chamber of Commerce**

The Episcopal Church of St. Benedict is now a member of the Bolingbrook Chamber of Commerce. Please stay alert for publicized chamber events.

## **SAVE THE DATE**

Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup> – Pet Blessing

Sunday, October 7<sup>th</sup> – The Feast Day of St. Francis, *Transferred*.



## **AROUND THE DIOCESE**

### **Saturday, August 25 at St. Paul & the Redeemer**

Facilitator Training for "Pathway to Reconciliation" The training will be from 9 am to 3 pm. Online registration is open until August 17. For more information contact Diane Shalda at (815-867-6721).

**September 8: Hispanic Youth Event** at Sagrada Familia/Holy Family, Lake Villa, Illinois

**Clergy Conference at Techny Towers**, October 14 – 16

**Hispanic Liturgy with Confirmation at St. James Cathedral**, October 20

## **THANK YOU NOTES**

The community of St. Benedict would like to thank the following people:

**Coffee hosts:** Laura Keyser, Frank Spoto, Anne Hazelhurst and Suzette Simpson,  
Angelique Hill

**Dan Troy** for taking the couch to Goodwill

**Tish Sanborn** for proofreading the Website

**Ruth Denofrio** for decorating the Parish Hall for Mother Barbara's New Ministry  
reception

**Ruth Denofrio, Erica Barta, Katie Libbey, Donna Williams, Rose**

**Cicero, Laura Keyser, and Mother Barbara** for providing food for the reception

**Linda Scheets** for setting up the altar for the reception service

**Mother Barbara** for the cakes for the graduates in June

**Donna Williams** for the information regarding the Black History presentation at St.  
Andrew's

**Beth Erickson** for leading Bible study

**Laura Keyser** for organizing the Strawberry Festival and to all who contributed

*Special thanks to Denise Majewski for her service to St. Benedict*



## **Removing the Mask of Motherhood**

*by Dominique Matti*

*This article originally appeared on [onbeing.org](http://onbeing.org).*

On Thursday, as we were leaving the home of some friends, I instructed my two-year-old to say goodbye. He acknowledged them one by one.

*“Bye, Azola. See you soon, Azola. See you later, Azola.”*

My friends have a two-year-old named Azola. They also have their own names, but in my child’s mind they are one entity, derivative of and in service to Azola.

My husband and I got married very quickly. There were just weeks between when I met his mother and the day she became my mother-in-law. I remember avoiding calling her any name at all to circumvent the sin of misnaming her. And as time went on, it became a question stranger and more awkward to ask: *“What do I call you? How do you want to be named?”*

When I brought it up to my husband, he told me that in his culture, parents take on the name of their firstborn. His mother, upon delivering him unto the world, was called Mama Femi. The mother of Femi. Her name became derivative of his existence.

My son has this toy microphone my Nana got for him after seeing him rap into the round end of a spoon. He likes to press the microphone into the faces of those in the room with a singular command.

“State ya name,” he says, expectantly.

“My name is MOMMY,” I recite, with the cadence of someone about to freestyle. But he whisks the mic away, always. Mommy is all he needs to know about who I am.

I answer to the role itself, my identity swallowed up by the eternal task at hand.

Last weekend I went to the emergency room, alone, late at night. It was the first time I had been without my kids since a date night in July. It was the first time I had been without any other person at all since I gave birth in January. And while an invisible string [connected me](#) to my two kids at home, I was hyper aware of how no one else could

see that tether. I could not lean on motherhood to identify myself. In that space I was a woman with no definitions, no edges, no outline. I was an anonymous somebody with unkempt hair, mystery stains on her shirt, sleepless circles beneath her eyes, dirty fingernails.

I found myself alluding to my children in the quick conversations about my symptoms. “Well I was taking my son out of the bath and when I walked by the mirror I noticed \_\_\_\_\_.” But the doctors didn’t care about the bath or my son. The patient was me, the name on my wristband was not Mommy.

But I am so tangled up in my children, I forget how to be without them.

In March I was on a panel about self-care, and before the panel began, I passed the baby to my husband and attempted to introduce myself to another panelist. Without the cuteness of my newborn as an icebreaker, I found myself tongue-tied, unable to maintain a conversation. I couldn’t remember what I used to say to people before I only talked about my children. I saw in her face that I was not making sense. I felt panicked and incoherent. Vulnerable. Small.

My friend Emma told me last week that her mother once shared that she was pregnant as often as she was because it was the only time she felt sane in her twenties. Emma said that there’s something powerful to being able to fulfill that kind of need in society. That maybe that was the point for some of us. To exist solely so that others can exist.

“I am starting to wonder if that’s who I am,” she said.

At first I bristled, but then I wondered, too. Isn’t that how I’d been living? My investment in mothering has gotten to the point where I have no identity outside of it, no clear-cut sense of myself beyond the straightforward borders of motherhood.

Like at the park yesterday afternoon, when exhaustion came crashing down on me. I felt the familiar words “I’m tired,” beginning to form in my mouth, but I swallowed them. Because when I played out the rest of the conversation in my head, I recognized that it wouldn’t follow the framework it often does. When I say that I’m tired, people instinctually ask “Ah, long night with the kids?” And I say, “Yup, the little one’s teething,” or “Yup, can you believe he’s almost three and still won’t sleep through the night?”

But the kids had slept soundly the night before. They didn't rise until 9 a.m. And when they woke, my husband put them in the bath, made them breakfast, put on cartoons. I slept until 11 a.m. I was tired because of something harder to pin down, something deep inside of me was tired, something I didn't want to talk about, something that had to do with who I am and have been [long before motherhood](#) kept me up at night.

And sitting on the park bench wrestling with the ability to express a basic declaration of how I felt, I began to confront a question I've been circling since I became pregnant: *Has motherhood swallowed me whole, or have I been burying myself in it?*

There's a comforting quality to fulfilling a role. There's a lure to a [predetermined course](#). A fast track out of the work of learning to be who you are. There are endless resources on how a mother should conduct herself. I can research how to best react to any given scenario. Motherhood is a "me" I can master. A pre-packaged purpose. When I move through the world as a mother I am a comprehensive statement.

But if I don't don the mask of motherhood, I am only more questions. I require a closer look. I am something to be figured out, a riddle, a puzzle. A problem I fear will dissatisfy me when it's solved. So, I run from myself, busy myself to get away from myself, bounce myself off of others to distort myself, cloak the visage of motherhood over my blankness, cover the question mark.

My husband and I talk a lot about what we will do when our children are grown. We say our 40s will make up for what we've sacrificed of our 20s. We say that we'll travel, stay up late, sleep in, thrust ourselves into all the creative work we're neglecting now. But if I continue down this road, when the tether is snapped and the children have grown and moved on, will there be anything left of myself to return to? Or will I be faced with the same questions in a much larger void, searching in a black hole the size of a galaxy for relics of myself?

Even now, I battle the impulse to close this with reflections on my duty to show my children a woman sure of herself, to not stunt them with my clinging, to teach them independence by modeling independence. But this essay is not about my children, [it's about me](#). If I am to explore the unknown corners of who I am, I will do it for myself. I am a cause noble enough for self-indulgence. I will sit alone in uncomfortable rooms,

unsure of myself as I learn to be certain. I will get to know myself for the sole purpose of making myself known. If that means fumbling through painful interaction, searching through the deep space of me for something to say, I will don my brightest blankness and cringe my way through it.

I don't begin or end at mothering. It's just something that I do now. It's a part of me that bloomed from the vast valleys that I am. I am 25 and learning to sit in those valleys for the first time. Not to pull weeds or anticipate storms or sigh at the towering height of the surrounding mountains. I sit alone in the overflowing emptiness and inhale.



# Little Tots Coloring Page





# What's the Scoop?

This cool activity is all about ice cream flavors. Unscramble the name of each popular flavor of ice cream. When finished, bring it to church and check your answers with Mother Barbara. A gift will be given.

1. WATERYBSRR
2. MIPUSON
3. EMOSO SCRATK
4. NILAVAL
5. POANANTILE
6. LARMECA
7. TRUBET NAEPC
8. GROANE THREEBS
9. CLAKB RYECRH
10. TACOOCHEL
11. TAPEUN RUBETT
12. NAABNA
13. COMAH
14. PLEAM TULAWN
15. THISOCAPI
16. FRONTIO (2 words)
17. IOCEKO HUDOG
18. CHAPE

## Calendar

### AUGUST

- 7 Annual Neighborhood Watch Meeting, 6p.m., *Fellowship hall*
- 12 Blessing of the Backpacks
- 26 Sunday School begins

### SEPTEMBER

- 5 Wednesday Night Bible Study, 7 p.m. -8:30 p.m.
- 9 Ministry Fair, Sunday School classes meet
- 12 Wednesday Night Bible Study, 7 p.m. -8:30 p.m.
- 16 Ministry Fair ends
- 19 Wednesday Night Bible Study, 7 p.m. -8:30 p.m.
- 23 Outdoor Eucharist and BBQ, *weather permitting*  
Sunday School classes meet
- 26 Wednesday Night Bible Study, 7 p.m. -8:30 p.m.
- 30 Confirmation Classes begin, *based on enrollment*  
Ongoing Spiritual Enrichment class begins (Adult Formation)

### OCTOBER

- 3 Wednesday Night Bible Study, 7 p.m. -8:30 p.m.
- 6 Pet Blessing
- 7 The Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, *transferred.*  
Ongoing Spiritual Enrichment meets
- 8 Morning Prayer begins, 6:30 a.m.  
Noon Day Prayer begins
- 10 Wednesday Night Bible Study, 7 p.m. -8:30 p.m.
- 20 An Evening at St. Benedict, *Silent and Live Auction 5 p.m.*
- 14 Sunday School meets  
Ongoing Spiritual Enrichment class meets
- 17 Wednesday Night Bible Study, 7 p.m. -8:30 p.m.
- 21 Confirmation classes meet  
Ongoing Spiritual Enrichment class meets
- 24 Wednesday Night Bible Study, 7 p.m. -8:30 p.m.
- 28 Sunday School meets  
Ongoing Spiritual Enrichment class meet
- 31 Wednesday Night Bible Study, 7 p.m. -8:30 p.m.

The Rev. Barbara Harrison Seward, *Rector*  
motherbarbara@stbenedict.ws

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Holy Eucharist 9:00 a.m.

Office Hours  
Mondays, 9:00 -1:00 p.m.  
Wednesdays, 9:00- noon  
Fridays, 9:00 - noon

*The Episcopal Church*  
*Welcomes You!*