



# THE FONT

FALL-WINTER 2021

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS WITHIN THE ORDER OF SAINT LUKE

## 75th Anniversary Retreat

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## Feature

The Church after Vax:  
Great Awakening or  
Continued Hospice?

Check out our updated  
website at:  
<http://saint-luke.net>

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## FROM THE ABBOT'S DESK

Dear Siblings,

As I sit here writing this, news has just broken of the new Omicron variant of Covid. I desperately hope that by the time you are reading this we will have discovered that it is not as serious as it now appears. But whether the news is as frightening as it seems or just another rock in the road on our way to recovery,



**Sr. Abbot  
Elizabeth Moore**

it is a reminder of how uncertain the future is.

Our hearts broke with grief recently at the sudden, completely unexpected death of Sr. Dianne Tobey Covault's mother. In the same week, some of us experienced great joy at seeing, for the first time, nieces and nephews and grandchildren born during the pandemic. Our lives are like rollercoasters. Our peaks and valleys flow past us at record-breaking speed.

And we are left with a challenge. Where, in all this uncertainty, do we find stability? What will let us say with Julian of Norwich, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."?

I believe that Advent helps us to ponder that question. It reminds us that our faith is not founded in philosophical treatises but is incarnated in flesh and blood existence. God is not merely "out there" but is among us and within us. Our hurts and our joys are not merely retribution and reward, but are an inherent part of embodied life.

Our stability does not come from a false hope that everything in our lives could be perfect – a "perfect" defined by our personal views — but from the certainty that Christ travels with us through the reality of our lives. We are accompanied by a truth-telling, boundary-breaking, ever-loving Guide both in frightening times and in joyous times.

In Advent, we celebrate the mystery that God was revealed to us in the person of a flesh and blood Jesus. My prayer for each of you this Advent is that this will give you stability in the midst of all the uncertainty that surrounds you. May the paradox of waiting for One who has already come, and will come again, and who has never been absent, help you believe that all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.

Christ will come again. Alleluia!  
Sr. Abbot Elizabeth

**See INSIDE for  
more photos and  
reports from our  
75th Anniversary  
Retreat!**



## Celebrating the Order's 75th Anniversary



Members of The Order of Saint Luke gathered at the foot of a stairway at Saint Paul of the Cross Monastery for the procession into closing worship at the 2021 Retreat marking OSL's 75th anniversary. Although attendance was lessened because of the coronavirus pandemic, those who attended rejoiced in the Order's history and tradition as they looked forward to its future.

At left, candidates for Life Vows come forward during closing worship when annual vows also were renewed. From left are Br. George Crisp, Sr. Dianne Tobey Covault, Sr. Sarah Mount-Elowoni and Sr. Cherlyn Gates. See pages TO COME for their faith testimonies.

*(Facebook Photos)*





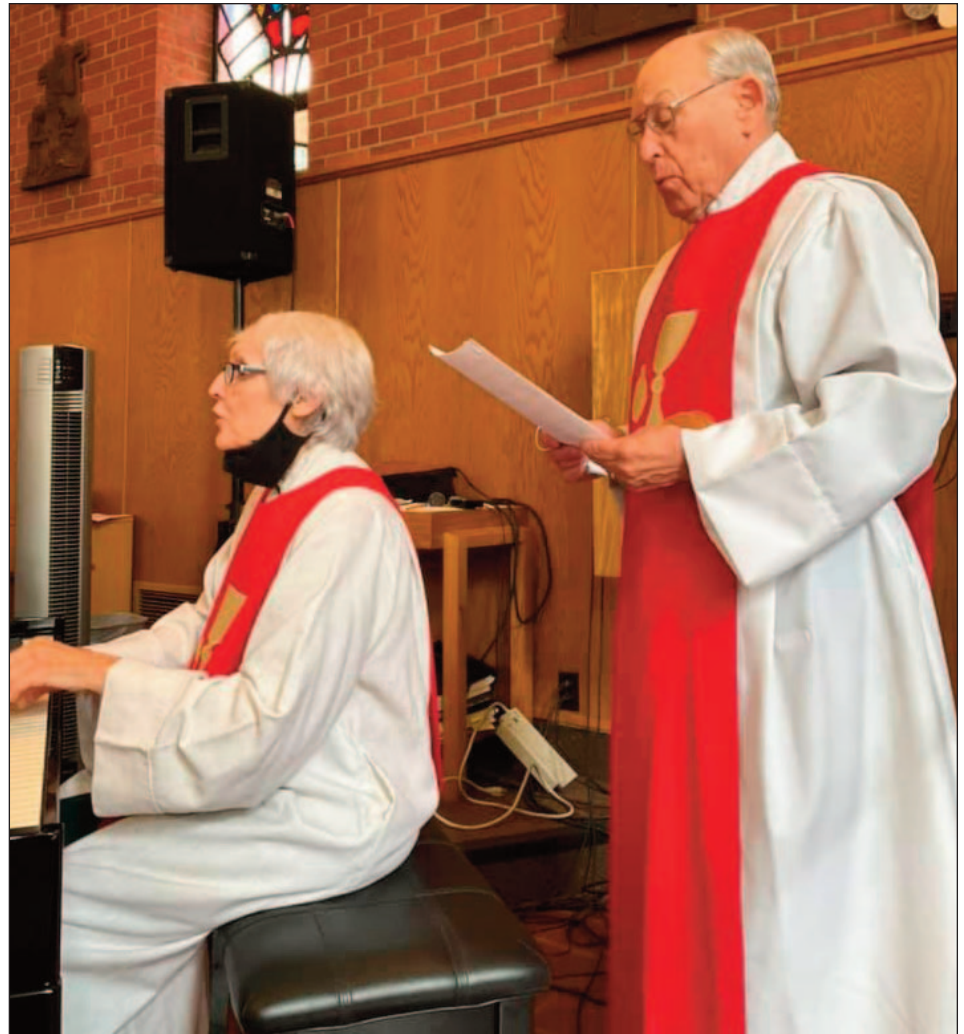
Face masks marked the new reality of living in a coronavirus-plagued world as members of The Order of Saint Luke process into the chapel of Saint Paul of the Cross monastery. The procession brought retreat participants into closing worship at which members renewed annual vows and members made Life Vows to The Order.

*(Facebook Photo)*



Above, Br. Don Saliers, keynote speaker for the 75th anniversary, congratulates Sr. Cherlyn Gates upon taking Life Vows. At right, Sr. Elise Eslinger plays and Br. Don Eslinger chants for one of the worship services during retreat.

*(Facebook Photo)*



## FROM THE CHANCELLOR GENERAL

Sr. Jeanette Block  
oslchancellor@gmail.com

## Minutes from General Chapter Meeting 2021

75th Anniversary Retreat (1946 – 2021), October 11 – 14, 2021 St. Paul of the Cross, Pittsburgh, PA

**October 11, 2021**

Retreat began at 4:00 p.m. with welcome by Abbot Elizabeth Moore at our opening worship of word and table. We then adjourned for dinner and met again at the meeting room at 7:00 p.m. to check in with one another

**October 12, 2021**

Those present: Abbot Elizabeth Moore, Dianne Covault, Jane Thorkelson, Jeanette Block, Beth Fender, Michael Fender, Richard Eslinger, Elise Eslinger, Jim DuFriend, Diana DuFriend, George Crisp, Scot Bontrager, Kimberly Greway, Mark Stamm, Nancy Cartwright, French Ball, Barbara Blackmon-Fortune, Daniel Benedict, Dwight Vogel, Gail Duggan, Becky Walker, Jim Denton, Sheri LoCascio, Cherilyn Gates, Sarah Mount Elewononi, Jay Brown, Jonathan Hehn, Blake Gulley, Ginnie Keiser, Barbara Lee, Laura King, David King, Rebecca Holland, Debra Neill, Bron Yocum, Ceann Hingston, Sandra Hingston, Heather Josslyn-Cranson, Don Saliers, Barbara Troxell, Brett Isernhagen, Jim Caffrey, Brent Sturm, Markley Rodgers, Seth O’Kegley-Gibson, John Melick, Geoffrey Moore, Heather Gottas Moore.

Abbot Elizabeth welcomed all to the retreat and indicated she would take questions if anyone had questions about her written report. No questions, we moved to Br. George Crisp’s report.

Br. George shared about next year’s retreat in Scottsdale, AZ. May 17 – 19, 2022 is Council and October 3 – 6, 2022 is retreat.

Sr. Heather followed to share that her report was in the Book of Reports. The Eastern PA Chapter has asked to be dis-

continued, all voted to allow this Chapter to disband. No objections. It will now be formally disbanded.

Sr. Jeanette Block shared the budget on Page 5 of the Book of Reports (Total Budget for 2021-22 is \$47,001)

Br. Scot Bontrager shared the website is up and running and we will be able to reaffirm and use PayPal to Affirm our Membership Vows and register for retreats

Br. David as our Pastoral Care Officer shared that he is following the website and FB to respond to prayer needs and requests.

Daily Office Revision Team (DORT) in operation for 10 years or more. BoOS was the first project. Br. Dwight indicated DORT will be meeting Thursday afternoon after retreat.

Br. Jonathan Hehn was asked by our Abbot to share his new book, “Reshaping Festschrifts, a collection of essays in memory of Horace Allen, Jr”. Br. Jonathan explained that Sacramental Life has merged into Doxology: A Journal of Worship and the Sacramental Life. Peer and non-peer reviewed articles appear, and he has a very good team to review the work that is submitted. Print designer and an art editor is on his team who make sure we are producing a beautiful product. He is looking for a new art editor. Br. Jonathan would like to hire someone to do the business aspects of OSL Publications. It is a lot of work to get works from idea to print as everyone is volunteering.

Br. Daniel Benedict referred us to his report in the Book of Reports.

Sr. Dianne Covault is now the Chaplain General and not the Periodicals



Sr. Jeanette Block

Chairperson, having shared that with Br. Jonathan.

Br. Daniel Benedict shared the New Member Process. Please see his report. Seeking, inquiring, and discerning being a part of The Order, he feels the process has been somewhat successful, but for some it has not been a good experience. When a companion does not respond to the inquirer, the process falls apart. The person expecting support is disappointed by not engaging with their companion. Br. Jim DuFriend is the one who assigns the inquirer to the companion. If you would like to be a companion, please let Br. Jim or Br. Daniel know.

Questions arose and Br. Daniel responded by referring us to the website for the modules and explained there is a FB page for the group of inquirers. Br. Mark Stamm shared about Our Story Project that it is “ours”. He invited us to get involved with the project by writing our own stories. He also shared about seminary chapters of The Order. The Perkins Chapter is struggling due to Covid. At one time we had 11 seminary chapters; he feels we need to have a student membership to develop a formation process. It would require an active faculty advisor to work the process. Have daily office led by the student members; have a monthly round table with their advisors; attend Perkins worship at least twice a month; engage in quiet day for a day long retreat revolving around all other activities; engage in ways to create formation for continuing membership and leadership within the Order. Br. Scot Bontrager indicated we could work on it to create a constitutional amendment to work it through for May 2022 council. We discussed keeping it more malleable. Sr. Abbot encouraged Br. Mark to move forward.

Br. David Eichelberger shared the

Continued on Page 5



## *Fellowship, Fun and Food (Always) at Retreat*



One of the great blessings of an Order of Saint Luke Retreat is the opportunity to share fun and fellowship with our siblings.

Dining out in the top photo are (from left) Br. Scot Bontrager, Sr. Heather Josse-lyn-Cranson, Sr. Rebecca L Holland, Br. David King, Br. Markley Rogers, Sr. Heather Gottas Moore, Br. Geoffrey Moore, Br. John Melick, and Br. George Crisp. Br. Blake Gulley was also there but he happened to be somewhere else when we snapped the photo.

Sharing a selfie at bottom left are (from bottom left), Sr. Rebecca, Sr. Cherlyn Gates, Sr. Heather, and Br. French Ball (with Br. Daniel Benedict in the background).



Everybody loves the Hors d'Oeuvres de Saint Luke reception!

*Photos courtesy of  
Sr. Rebecca Holland  
and  
Br. Daniel Benedict  
from Facebook*

## Minutes from General Chapter Meeting 2021

**Continued from Page 4**

flag created for The Order and Br. Brent Sturm shared about baubles and beads and our apparel by qbstores at [saintluke.qbstores.com](http://saintluke.qbstores.com)

Sr. Kimberly Greway asked us to bring our cellphones for her presentation tomorrow morning. The Hoyt Hickman Chapter will meet on Wednesday. They meet entirely online. Br. Matthias Tanner shared the DaySpring Chapter will

meet tomorrow at noon. Br. David Eichelberger is taking orders for OSL FaceMasks.

**For T-shirts and other apparel, please go to [saintluke.qbstores.com](http://saintluke.qbstores.com)**

We listened and witnessed to the testimony of those choosing Life Vows. We have four this year: Sr. Dianne Covault, Br. George Crisp, Sr. Cheryl Gates and Sr. Sarah Mount Elewononi.

This closed out our Chapter Meeting

as we wanted time to focus on renewing our relationships with each other after the Covid year of 2020, enjoy our presenters, Br. Mark Stamm, Br. Don Saliers, and Sr. Kimberly Greway, and enjoy the festivities of the anniversary celebration.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sr. Jeanette Block,  
Chancellor General

## IN THE COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS Br. Robert-George Schall, OSL [bhagwon@earthlink.net](mailto:bhagwon@earthlink.net)

Faith communities have frequently kept necrologies of those saints who have gone before us. In this manner The Order of Saint Luke remembers these sisters and brothers.

December 1	Br. Mark R. Babb	(2020) Michigan Annual Conference
December 13	Br. O. Ray Fitzgerald	(2014) Baltimore, Cal-Pac
	Br. William Joseph Beasley	(2018), California
December 15	Br. Millard Byrd Knowles	(2011) West Ohio/Maryland
December 16	Br. David Howard Tripp	(2007) Indiana
December 18	Br. David W. Yingling	(2015) Michigan
December 20	Br. Rick Lyddon	(2007) California, Arizona, Nevada
December 22	Br. David Lyman Taylor	(2008) Illinois and North Carolina
December 24	Br. Wallace P. Blackwood	(2005) Louisiana
December 29	Sr. Deena McGuire	(2015) Illinois
January 2	Br. John R. Miller	(2010) West Virginia
January 3	Br. Bill Kintner	(2016) California
January 11	Br. Theodore James (Ted) Mitchell	(2020) Illinois, Great Rivers Annual Conference (past Prior, Illinois Great Rivers Chapter OSL)
January 17	Sr. Martha Hickman	(2015) Tennessee
January 18	Br. Edwin S. (Ted) Gault	(2018) New York East
January 22	Br. Raymond Charles Conatser, Jr.	(2018) Tennessee
January 29	Br. Don Brown	(2013) New Jersey (former president)
January	Br. Robert Brewster	(2020) Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada
February 13	Br. Robert N. Terry	(2012) New York
February 20	Br. William Stanley Winters	(2014) East Ohio Annual Conference
	Br. Roger (Rog) Michael Baker	(2017) Virginia
February 27	Br. Forest Wilbur Shue, Sr.	(2007) New Jersey
March 3	Br. Buford James George	(2020) Northern New Jersey Conference
March 9	Br. Alvin Chester Rose,	(2017) Great Plains Annual Conference
March 11	Br. Ralph Marsden Kitley	(2008) North Carolina
March 18	Br. Matthew Burroughs	(2018) Louisiana
March 19	Br. Thomas Frederick Tracewell	(2011) Alabama
March 20	Br. Paul Rogers	(2003) California
March 25	Br. S. James Schmittle, Sr.	(2018) Pennsylvania (former president)
March 30	Br. Timothy (Tim) J. Crouch	(2005) Ohio

A request: If you or your chapter are aware of other deceased members of the Order, I'd be grateful if you could send information to me at [bhagwon@earthlink.net](mailto:bhagwon@earthlink.net) so that they may be included in the list of siblings for whom we give thanks to God.

## REQUIESCAT IN PACE

Br. Robert-George Schall, OSL [bhagwon@earthlink.net](mailto:bhagwon@earthlink.net)

## Jeanne Audrey Powers, OSL (1932 – 2017)

The Rev. Jeanne Audrey Powers, an active member of The Order of Saint Luke, was 85 when she died peacefully in Switzerland on September 29, 2017, with the assistance of Dignitas, a highly respected, compassionate organization that enabled her to choose and meet “death with dignity.” This decision was significant in the latter years of her life, when she courageously faced physical and cognitive diminishment.

She was a pioneer ecumenist who represented The United Methodist Church as a respected teacher, workshop leader, writer, preacher, spokesperson, campus minister, and mission executive. Her best-known role was staffing the United Methodist General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and therefore holding leadership roles in the World and National Councils of Churches.

Raised in Minnesota, she was a leader and active member of the Minnesota Conference of the United Methodist Church. Always on the leading edge of historical shifts in culture, Rev. Powers was a global-level advocate for a more progressive, inclusive faith, focused on inclusive language, relevant liturgies, LGBTQ struggles, and opening leadership opportunities to women, young people, and people of many cultures.

Jeanne Audrey (who disliked being called “sister”) graduated from Mankato State University in 1954, majoring in Speech and English, and was chosen to be a Danforth Graduate Fellow, a life-changing experience. That fellowship enabled a year at Princeton Theological Seminary, with her M.Div. completed in 1958 at Boston University School of Theology. She continued for a year of advanced study at St. Andrews University in Scotland, plus work at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey (Switzerland) and at Queens College in Birmingham, England.



The Rev. Jeanne Audrey Powers, OSL

She had an enormous and gracious capacity to befriend and mentor many future church leaders, including those whose ideas and experiences were different from hers. In 1958, Jeanne Audrey was ordained in Minnesota as a deacon in the Methodist Church. When ordained an elder in 1961, she was among the first women in the Methodist Church granted full clergy rights.

For a decade, Rev. Powers was the state director of the Minnesota Methodist Student Movement as well as the Wesley Foundation Campus Minister of the University of Minnesota, at both its St. Paul and Minneapolis campuses. In both cities, she created gathering spaces where students lived and worked together as she challenged them to risk unfamiliar territory and broaden their horizons. While in that role, she also staffed University United Methodist Church and the Minnesota Annual Conference.

Starting in 1968, she staffed the Methodist Board of Missions personnel office in New York, later reorganized as the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries. In that assignment she gave leadership to the “US-2” pro-

gram, an ongoing exciting way for young adults to serve two years in the domestic mission field.

Jeanne Audrey was a key representative to the World Council of Churches. She had a role in three WCC General Assemblies and was a guiding force in the creation of “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry,” a document that has prompted reform and convergence among Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians since its approval on January 15, 1982, in Lima, Peru. She gave outstanding leadership to the development of the life-changing Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women 1988-1998. During that decade and the years following, women in many denominations were empowered because of her work.

Within this country Jeanne Audrey worked tirelessly as a vice president of the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC), chairing its Faith and Order Commission for six years and then chairing its Commission on Regional and Local Ecumenism (CORLE). She was a member of teams leading to the NCCC’s Middle East Policy Statement and critique of Israel’s treatment of Palestinians.

Jeanne Audrey was the first woman to be nominated for the office of a bishop in The United Methodist Church, an honor she declined in 1972 and 1976. She was also a member of The United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women, organized in 1973. Throughout her life, she was committed to feminist issues. Until her death, she was a driving force in the Reconciling Ministries Movement, and she came out as a lesbian during her sermon at its national gathering in 1995.

Her alma mater, Boston University School of Theology, named her a “Pioneer Woman” in 1995 and bestowed upon her the highly esteemed Anna

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## FROM THE PROVINCIAL GENERAL



Sr. Heather Josselyn-Cranson  
hjosselyn@hotmail.com

+ Action item: disbanding the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter because of continued inactivity

Chapter	Prior	Recent Activity	Members	Prayer Concerns
Charles Mosebrook	Lynn Basan	Online gatherings,	Ten	Brothers Job Cabral, MD, Brylex Sosa, EMT, (Col.) Pablito Melchor and (Capt.) Jonathan Marcos, both military chaplains, all waiting for vocations, and for the Pilipinas York Rite Bodies
Greater New Jersey	Fran Noll	Meeting on-line, choosing a book for joint reading	Twenty	Mourning Gloria Smith and praying for Ken Smith
Koinonia Chapter	Br. Aiden (Joshua Allison)	Weekly Th AM prayer, quarterly meetings, visits from Brs Daniel and Mark	Nine (plus "constituents")	Longing to gather in person to celebrate the Eucharist
Dayspring Chapter	Br. Matthias Tanner	2x weekly meeting for prayer over Zoom	Thirty	None shared
Perkins STH	Br. Mark Stamm	Reconstituting		Prayers for life after COVID
East Ohio	Br. Kyle Gould	No recent activity		Need for fresh energy
Trinity (N. Texas)	Br. Terry Heislen	Discussions on resuming regular meetings	Seventeen	discernment, charity, mindfulness of our purpose, and the presence of the Spirit as we prepare to move into a new season in the life of the chapter.
Illinois Great Rivers Chapter	Br. Mick Laffin	Zoom meetings on 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, prayer and book study	Twenty-five	Prayers for meeting in person
California Pacific Chapter	Br. George Martzen	W evening prayer weekly, Chapter meeting in May	Seventeen (?)	Safety during the pandemic
Philippines Chapter	Br. Ador C. Tolentino	F2F meeting in February and Zoom meeting in June.	Seventy-eight and four in inquiry	None shared
Upper New York Chapter	Br. Brett Johnson	Zoom prayer/meditation day on Sept 29	Ten	general health and well-being of the Chapter, for Prior Brett as he prepares for ordination interviews, and a renewed energy within the Chapter
Singapore Chapter	Br. Anthony Goh	No F2F or Zoom meetings	Twelve	prayer as we slowly and carefully extend our reach and numbers and emerge from the 'bomb shelter' of our alerts
Winged Ox Association	Br. David Collette	Weekly meetings on Tuesdays via Zoom	Two members	Continued participation and growth
Hoyt Hickman Memorial Chapter	Sr. Kimberly Greway	Evening Prayer 2X monthly; Compline 1X monthly, plans for in-person meetings at retreat, council and one other	Nineteen-ish	Members with health issues and job changes
St. Francis Chapter	Sr. Alice Kay Lovelace	Plans for an October event	Fifteen	At the loss of Br. James Mussman; for the vitality of the Chapter



## Weekly Opportunities for Corporate Prayer in the Order of St. Luke

(rev. 11/30/2021)

**Morning Prayer**

Title: Morning Prayer  
Day: Thursday  
Time: 7:00AM Eastern / 4:00AM Pacific  
Platform: Zoom on the first Thursday  
Conference call the rest of the month  
Host Chapter: Dayspring Chapter  
Contact: Br. Matthias Tanner at  
Br.Mathhias@gmail.com

**Evening Prayer**

Title: Evening Prayer  
Day: Tuesday  
Time: 7:30PM Eastern / 4:30PM Pacific  
Platform: Zoom on the first Tuesday  
Conference call the rest of the month  
Host Chapter: Dayspring Chapter  
Contact: Br. Matthias Tanner at  
Br.Mathhias@gmail.com

**Compline**

Title: Compline  
Day: Monday  
Time: 9:00PM Eastern / 6:00PM Pacific  
Platform: Zoom  
Host Chapter: None  
Contact: Br. Adam Lassen on Facebook

Title: Mattins  
Day: Thursday  
Time: 10:15AM Eastern / 7:15AM Pacific  
Platform: Zoom  
Host Chapter: Koinonia Chapter  
Contact: Br. Aidan (Joshua Allison) at  
barefootfriar@gmail.com

Title: Evening Prayer  
Day: Wednesday (Biweekly)  
Time: 3:30PM Eastern / 12:30PM Pacific  
Platform: Zoom  
Host Chapter: Hoyt Hickman Memorial Chapter  
Contact: Sr. Kimberly Greway at  
kimberly.greway@alleghenycounty.us

Title: Compline  
Day: Thursday (Monthly on the first  
Thursday)  
Time: 8:30PM Eastern / 4:30PM Pacific  
Platform: Zoom  
Host Chapter: Hoyt Hickman Memorial Chapter  
Contact: Sr. Kimberly Greway at  
kimberly.greway@alleghenycounty.us

**Midday Prayer**

Title: Midday Prayer  
Day: Monday through Thursday  
Time: 1:30PM Eastern / 10:30AM Pacific  
Platform: Facebook Live  
Host Chapter: None  
Contact: Sr. Celia Halfacre on Facebook

Title: Evening Prayer  
Day: Wednesday  
Time: 8:00PM Eastern / 5:00PM Pacific  
Platform: Zoom  
Host Chapter: Cal-Pac Chapter  
Contact: Br. George Martzen at  
gmartzen@gmail.com

**Other**

Title: A Liturgy for When We Cannot Meet  
Day: Sunday  
Time: 4:00PM Eastern / 1:00PM Pacific  
Platform: Zoom  
Host Chapter: None  
Contact: Br. Brett Isernhagen at  
brettisernhagen@vaumc.org  
or 757-231-5553

## Sr. Jeanne Audrey Powers (1935-2017)

Continued from Page 3

Howard Shaw Award. She was well-loved by colleagues who relied on her remarkable ability to summarize meetings and large events and to accurately remember information from earlier meetings and events. She is also remembered as a talented writer and a leader who inspired and graciously mentored many future church leaders.

In 1996, she was the first recipient of the Jeanne Audrey Powers Award, established by the Minnesota Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns. Since then, the award has been given annually to a person, congregation, or group that exemplifies the spirit of ecumenism on an individual, local, state, national, or international level. In 2014, she was again recognized at Minnesota's Annual Conference Session and presented with a plaque that read, "In recognition of your many years of visionary leadership and service to the Minnesota Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church, and the people of God everywhere." In accepting her award, she said, "No matter where

or what I have been doing, this annual conference has been my home. I am so grateful for it."

She said, "I have chosen to swim against the stream in many areas of controversy [in the church] because I truly believe that the Church is the Body of Christ, called to share its message of healing, reconciliation, and yes, salvation ... I do not choose the Church simply because I want to belong, but because I believe in its transforming Spirit."

In 2002, Jeanne Audrey took up active retirement at Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California, where her life was celebrated in a memorial service on October 23, 2017. Jeanne Audrey planned the service herself along with Br. Dwight and Sr. Linda Vogel and Sr. Barbara Troxell. In a testament to her life and service, six United Methodist bishops, many of whom were women, attended. She is buried in Mankato, Minnesota.

Several years prior to her death, Jeanne Audrey planned and designed all the words on her own tombstone (as seen in the photo), including the following phrases: Visionary and Prophetic. "Subversive to the End."



Jeanne Audrey Powers is remembered by this monument, whose inscription she wrote herself.

Requiescat in pace, Jeanne Audrey Powers, OSL, as we remember you this day.

Sources: Ancestry.com, Glenwood Cemetery, Mankato, MN., and the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Sr. Barbara Troxell contributed to this article.

If you would like to make any comments or further additions to this obituary, please contact Br. Robert-George, OSL Necrologist, at: Bhagwon@earthlink.net )

## FROM THE PASTORAL CARE OFFICER

Br. David Eichelberger, OSL  
daveosl@yahoo.com

Beloved Siblings, Brothers, and Sisters:

As we journey through Advent, may we look always to the Light of Christ, our Redeemer and Sustainer in all seasons of life.



Br. David  
Eichelberger

We lament the passing of a newly welcomed **Brother Lawrence “Ty” Kane III**, whom Brother Daniel Benedict had mentored during his time of formation on November 27, 2021. Br. Lawrence

was a 20-year member of the US Army Reserves and was a mental health professional for 32 years.

We also lament the passing of **Brother Kenneth Rowe** on October 8. Brother Ken worked before retirement as the Methodist Librarian for Drew University and was also a professor of Church History at Drew University. He was a diligent collector of all things Methodist and encouraged the Order to preserve its records and publications in the Drew Library vault of the United Methodist Archives and History Center.

I am saddened to report that my brother-in-law, Jeffery Garrett, succumbed to septicemia and died.

It was a joy for us to gather in person once more at our Annual Retreat in Pittsburgh as we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the founding of our Order. We thank **Br. Don Saliers**, **Br. Mark Stamm** and **Sr. Kimberly Greway** for their presentations at the Retreat. Br. Canon Mark Stamm repeated his invitation for us all to share our remembrances of our life in the Order for the Our Story Project.

We were delighted to see **Br. Brendan (Dwight) Vogel** and to meet his



“Hear our prayer, O Lord.” (Photo by Zac Durant, Unsplash)

spouse Gail.

We are happy that **Sr. Mary O Benedict** is enjoying improvement in her health.

**Sr. Magdalene Ruth (Cynthia) Astle** was unable to attend due to health issues she continues to endure. Please keep her in your prayers.

As our world continues to suffer with the effects of the Covid-19 virus and its several variants, we pray for those who have lost loved ones, for those in hospital care, for those continuing to suffer lasting after-effects, for countries where no vaccines are available and especially for those who care for the sick, whether at home, in clinics or in hospitals. May we reach the day when we respond to this global challenge as a global community with compassion and care for all.

Please keep in your prayers those who have been displaced or injured due to forest fires, volcanic eruption, floods, droughts, typhoons, water level rises and the varieties of effects of our challenging environment.

Almighty God, the Creator of Heaven and all that we see in this universe. You have set into motion the systems of nature that normally work for harmony in your creation. We lament that we have not understood how great an impact our activities have contributed to upsetting that system. Give guidance and insight to all those who study, legislate and act to bring healing to this precious planet.

We lift our prayers in behalf of those who are dealing with illnesses of a great variety in these days.

We pray for a cure for a number of diseases which plague humankind. Strengthen those who do research to find those cures and treatments that we may prevent the suffering we see around the world.

We pray for peace among and within nations. Cure our warring madness. You have blessed this earth with food enough and resources enough for all. We lament that a very small portion is allotted to the benefit of the many, and a great portion is reserved for the wealthy among us. Help us to examine our consciences to see how we may “live more simply so that others can simply live.”

We thank you for the continuation of our Order of Saint Luke. Give your inspiration to our General Officers and to our local Priors and officers. May they continue to guide us in the paths of truth. We pray that your Holy Spirit will continue to inspire others to become inquirers in our way. Bless them in their times of discernment that we may welcome each as a beloved sibling of this Order. Strengthen each of us in our commitment to lift up the Sacraments, proclaim the Apostolic Hope and to support the work of worship wherever we may be.

We offer these prayers to you in our Savior’s name, even Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen.



## FROM THE PRIOR GENERAL

Br. George R. Crisp, OSL  
revgrc@yahoo.com

The process for naming recipients for the 2022 Hoyt L. Hickman Award will be underway in early February. If all participate, nineteen seminaries will present the award on behalf of the Order.



Br. George  
Crisp

This award, in honor of our esteemed brother, is presented to a graduating senior who has shown exceptional ability in liturgical scholarship and/or exceptional ability in leading worship. Three Hickman Award recipients attended our retreats, one each year, for the past three years.

The Hickman Award comes with a certificate suitable for framing and the gift of a handmade ceramic chalice and paten given to the recipient. (If the recipient is not someone seeking ordination, an alternative gift of a ceramic bowl can be provided.) These

beautiful and functional ceramics are crafted by E. Preston Rice of Tyrone, Pennsylvania.

### 2022 Spring Council Meeting

Dates for the 2022 Spring Council meeting are set for May 17-19. In addition to the elected officers of the General Chapter, the Council consists of appointed officers, chapter priors (or their representatives), and canons of the Order.

The meeting will be held at the Franciscan Renewal Center, 5802 E. Lincoln Drive, Scottsdale, AZ, 85253. More information about the center can be found at [www.thecasa.org](http://www.thecasa.org).

### 2022 Retreat

The 2022 Retreat of the Order of Saint Luke will be held October 3-6 at the Franciscan Renewal Center (see address above). This is earlier than usual due to the availability of the retreat center.

The Franciscan Renewal Center features single or double occupancy rooms with private bath, pool/spa, putting green, on-site dining, numerous outdoor amenities, including a desert walk and healing garden, and a variety of places to pause and reflect in a peaceful environment, “a meeting place so serene that even the trees whisper.”

Our guest speaker will be Robert Hurd, author of *Compassionate Christ, Compassionate People: Liturgical Foundations of Christian Spirituality*. In this book, Bob Hurd brings insights from scripture, theology, philosophy and liturgical tradition to bear on the task of laying the foundations of Christian spirituality. Bob’s widely used liturgical music, published by Oregon Catholic Press, is featured in numerous hymnals in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain and Australia.

Now is a good time to make your plans to attend this retreat in a lovely setting.

## MOMENT FOR MEDITATION

Ceramic figures of Mary and Joseph such as these are popular in Mexico during Christmas. The Advent season of preparation often means choosing a new Nativity scene, or adding to one that is a family heirloom. Each scene has its own distinctive style and features, often reflecting a vibrant cultural understanding as much as a faith focus. What do we focus on as we get out our holiday decorations? Does an Advent wreath play a role in our home devotions? Do we have a hard time restraining ourselves from putting the figurine of Baby Jesus into the manger before Christmas Eve? In other words, where is our focus in anticipation of the holiday?



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## *New Life-Vowed Members Share Their Faith Journeys*

### Br. George Crisp: ‘My Heart is Filled with Gratitude’

For many years I have listened to and watched my siblings as they have made their testimonies and taken Life Vows in the Order of Saint Luke. I have thought about making my own profession of lifelong vows with each brother or sister who came before me. About three years ago this became a more prominent idea in my heart and mind. I began inquiring about the process to become a Life-Vowed member, and this past year I have acted upon that prompting of the Spirit.

My heart is filled with gratitude for Br. Dwight Vogel and for the guidance, structure and compassion with which he has served as my mentor this past year. We’ve both enjoyed our collegial conversations laced with memories of working together on many projects and in many settings. He is a beloved friend and brother, and an invaluable resource to the Order.

I am additionally grateful for every one of my siblings who sustained me with your prayers as I was struggling to breathe with COVID pneumonia last December. Your calls, email messages, cards and gifts were treasures I can never repay, except with prayers of my own for you.

#### **Reviewed the Rule in depth**

In many ways, I feel like a Life-Vowed Member; maybe some of you presumed I was. Br. Robert Bryant Davis introduced me to the Order in 1983, and long ago I dedicated myself to the Order and to the upholding of our Rule of Life and Service, a commitment that has not wavered for nearly 40 years. During the discernment process I have had the chance to review those Rules in depth and dissect how they have affected me over the years. As part of the Order I have met the most wonderful people and experienced the quality of



their character – and some of you are really characters!

I was raised in the church – mostly Methodist, but also some generic non-denominational military base chapels. My parents were intentional about providing me and my siblings with a foundation they hoped would lead to faith formation, although they would not have used that language. They saw to it that I had opportunities to sing in choirs, take part in youth groups, serve on work teams, attend camps, and contribute to the worship life of the church. It was excellent training for me.

In my teens, I explored other denominations and developed a fondness for liturgies that appealed to my musical ear. That reached a peak in my college years when my flirtation with the Episcopal Church was serious. (It’s why I consider myself a “closet Episcopalian.”) I put off God’s call to the ministry, received when I was 17, until my 27th year and my second semester in seminary at Claremont. My plan was to serve as a music minister in some big old church

I’m fond of saying that Baptism is dangerous. Baptism is a profound way of saying we renounce the powers of this world that defy God, rebel against God, or try to draw us away from God.

– Br. George Crisp

somewhere. God just laughs at our plans. Vocationally, I surrendered to the comfort of my United Methodist heritage and was privileged to develop a solid career in pastoral ministry which provided me with many rich experiences. Enough history.

#### **Comfort of contemplation**

I like music in many genres, but I prefer songs with flowing melodies, quiet harmonies and gentle rhythms. That’s not to say that I dislike the loud, driving rockers that have also been a part of my history. Are those metaphors for how I have experienced the Order? The comfort of deep contemplation and worship with integrity, paired with the joy of fellowship and adventures too numerous to recount, have fulfilled that balance in my life.

I was honored to be invited to submit some of my hymns and a communion setting to *The Book of Offices and Services*. A few years later, I was pleased to be added to Daily Office Revision Team,

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# Br. George Crisp: ‘My Heart is Filled with Gratitude’

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and work on *The Lukan Psalter*. That work has blended my love of music, poetry and theology..

Now, if we’re going to talk about the sacramental life, then a few words must be said about the sacraments themselves without it sounding like a seminary class or a Board of Ordained Ministry interview. I’ve often thought that the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist are the closest we come to touching Jesus in this life. The reverse is also true, that Jesus touches us in the sacraments. They are corporal, bodily, physical acts with tactile elements. John Wesley included them in his teaching about the means of grace.

I’m fond of saying that Baptism is dangerous. Baptism is a profound way of saying we renounce the powers of this world that defy God, rebel against God, or try to draw us away from God. This summer I did my first baptism in an ELCA setting and I’ve taken that language from the ELCA baptismal ritual. In baptism, we affirm the faith that gives shape to our lives and calls us into a deeper relationship with God.

I wish we would give more attention to the sacrament of baptism, and I am glad that the Remembrance of Baptism is part of our Morning Prayer service. Please don’t discount or short-change that portion but make it an intentional component of the service. I’ve often told folks that while religion may be a personal thing it is never private. By virtue of our baptism we are part of a vast family in Christ. Our language about dying to sin and rising with Christ (which comes from Paul) is more than symbolic. It reveals the deepest aspirations we have to connect with God and live as faithful disciples of Christ.

I’ve come to believe that the Eucharist is the presence of Christ breaking into the world. The church is formed by the Eucharist as an alternative to the

principalities and the powers of the age. The Table is the alternative to violence, exploitation, abuse, war, oppression, inequality and the covert theologies that try to subvert us – consumerism, nationalism, sexism, racism – those things which are contrary to following Jesus. I love the poetic images of grain once scattered being gathered into the loaf just as we are gathered at the Table. Likewise, the grapes of the vine are blended into the wine, just as we are a blended community, boldly saying that this feast makes a difference in how we live our lives.

One of the ethical lessons I learned from my parents was a concern for those less fortunate than myself; it was both a family and a biblical value. My parents had come from poorer families, but were well loved and fed, as my family of origin was. We cannot ignore that the scriptures call us to care for the poor and marginalized. As Br. Daniel says, “Lukan spirituality is oriented to the poor and those who suffer on the margins of daily life.” Bishop Marianne Swenson used to say that the church’s job is to move those at the margins to the middle and those in the middle to the margins.

The Order used to live that out in more obvious, practical ways. I remember the community center in Akron where Br. Timothy Crouch served, distributing food to clients and we took part in that ministry. We used to take a monetary offering before the Profession of Vows service and give it to a local charity (as suggested by our retreat center host). Here is a \$50 donation to start that offering for this year.

I also like what Br. Daniel says about “Lukan spirituality being prophetic and countercultural.” We must be imaginative and poetic in ways that subvert entrenched power and privilege. Faith does not mean we separate the spiritual out of the social. We are a privileged group: we have the means and ability to

travel; we have a love of finery as seen in our vestments, and these seem to be in opposition to the poor. I wonder if our charism is an elitist position, or if there are ways the sacramental emphasis could speak to the underprivileged.

We may seek the best integrity in our worship but we must not forget the poor. What if we matched the work we do with the marginalized to the finery of our worship? One would follow the other: concern for the poor and marginalized with a prophetic and countercultural witness. I don’t see that so much as piety as I do a way of living out or embodying the gospel.

The church (people) needs to uplift and promote the values of our faith, especially in regard for the marginalized. COVID revealed yet again the inequalities in the U.S. in multiple ways – health care, policing, housing, jobs, wealth disparity, etc. Faith can address those issues, but real change has to come in bigger ways. There is a lot more for us to do here, especially with regard to our racial profile as an Order, and I challenge the Order to be better at this.

Those who know me well know I’m always searching, struggling for peace in my life. I want to be a person of peace which I see as the fullness of shalom, not just the quiet of solitude, or the absence of conflict, but wholeness and well-being. Such wholeness is not simply having a body that is not stressed, imperiled or diseased. It is also being at peace with God where a right relationship with God has been restored. For me, that is the deepest meaning of salvation.

Peace ties us intimately with Jesus, the Prince of Peace. By being in a right relationship with God, who is the author of peace, we can be at peace at the center of our lives. We are ill at ease when we are not reconciled with God, but we can have peaceful composure every day

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## Sr. Sarah Francis: 'Striving for Justice and Peace'

Dear Sr. Abbot Elizabeth,

This is my formal letter reporting on my discernment process for taking Lifelong Vows in the Order of Saint Luke this October at our retreat. I have written reflections on the Rule of Life and Service of the order as well as the two additional questions in the Lifelong vows (about serving Christ in all persons and striving for justice and peace) and shared them with Br. Brendan (Dwight) Vogel from mid December 2020 until

August 25. This period of reflection has led me to affirm that my association with OSL fits my life as a follower of Jesus and sustains my ministry as one called to lead the Church (including but not limited to United Methodists) at this time of upheaval.

As I look over my association with OSL I remember hearing that it existed while I was at Duke, but not knowing anyone personally who was part of it. In those years God drew me to the Episco-

pals for Morning Prayer 4 days a week before class. I had joined the Catholic Workers in Wednesday Evening prayer when I spent the summer with them in New York five years prior to Duke, but Morning Prayer at Duke was my first experience with the Daily Office on a regular basis. We chanted the whole office on Wednesdays and the leaders gave me my own BCP for Christmas during my first year. In

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## Br. George Crisp: 'My Heart is Filled with Gratitude'

*Continued from Page 13*

when we believe in God to help us cope with any circumstance. I find such peace in baptism, Eucharist, and the sacramental life. [A Poem of Peace]

Some have asked me why I want to be a Life-Vowed member of the Order. That's a good question, but the wrong focus. It is not a question of why I want to be a Life-Vowed member; it is a question of my being called to be a Life-Vowed member, to consecrate myself to the sacramental life for the rest of my days on this earth, God being my strength and shield. That is my discernment.

### A Poem of Peace

There is peace in the air after spring rain,

Peace in the blossoming garden domain.

There is peace in the warmth of a calm summer's night,

Peace when the darkness kisses candlelight.

There is peace in the wave of the pines in a breeze,

Peace in the autumn wind rustling the leaves.

There is peace in the stream with the cold water's flow,

Peace on the earth with the winter's first snow.

There is peace in the song of the bird when it wakes,

Peace in the light of the dawn when it breaks.

There is peace in the clouds gently floating above,

Peace to be found in the arms of your love.

There is peace in the wave drawing close to the shore,

Peace to be valued in the ones we adore.

There is peace in the steadfast rhythm of time

Peace to be treasured in every day rhyme.

There is peace in the heart when you've not learned hate,

Peace full of promise, it's never too late.

There is peace to be made when the treaty is signed,

Peace to be seen when the stars are aligned.

There is peace to be heard in the blend of harmony,

Peace that you taste both sweet and savory.

There is peace to be seen in the comforts of home,

Peace to be held in the depths of shalom.

There is peace in the depths of our prayer,

Peace in each act of tender loving care.

There is peace at the end as away slips the soul,

Peace in the tears you weep when you're whole.

There is peace in the water that claims you by name,

Peace in the midst of the Spirit's wild flame.

There is peace beyond measure in the cup and the bread,

Peace in the Host whose table is spread.

*George R. Crisp*

*Redlands, California – Oct. 1-2, 2021*

PS Years ago, my friend Jim Strathdee set the words of Satish Kumar to music:

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.

Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.

Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.

Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.

We are simply asked to make gentle our bruised world.

To be compassionate of all, including oneself.

Then in the time left over to repeat the ancient tale

and go the way of God's foolish ones.



# Sr. Sarah Francis: ‘Striving for Justice and Peace’

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this way I was taught to treasure the Daily Office promoted by OSL.

I next heard about OSL in 1998 when I was appointed to my first congregation in Lynn, Massachusetts. My colleague (then called Ruth) and Loyd Ashton, her husband, were reviving the chapter that Mark Stamm had organized at BU. We met monthly for Eucharist and a potluck meal, led BU’s School of Theology worship occasionally and had one or two retreats each year. What drew me was belonging to a group of Christian friends who helped to sustain me through my first years of ministry. While I was aware of the larger Order, I did not, however, desire to become part of another larger organization of Christians (I was quite active in another ecumenical Christian movement called Camp Farthest Out, and was regularly attending the New England Annual Conference retreats and gatherings). So, I did not make the vows or pay the dues to OSL for the first few years that I was active in the BU chapter. Yet the members of the BU chapter became dear, lifelong friends with whom I have shared so much of myself over the years.

When Sr. Cheryl Gates informed me that Karen Westerfield Tucker was coming to BU and I discerned that it was a good time to begin a ThD with her, which would make me a liturgist, I decided it was fitting to join the Order. This decision was confirmed when I began to attend NAAL meetings, and the United Methodist pre-meetings and started to become acquainted with you and other siblings of the Order. Divine Providence appears to have then “reeled” me further into this company by guiding my family to relocate to Greater Pittsburgh, making it easy to attend the annual retreats, and still tend to my family duties. The invitation to join the editing team of OSL Publications further pulled me in this direction.



As the foundations of the UMC shake, crack and crumble and I seek to find my place as a liturgical scholar/teacher with Methodism deep in my bones, OSL promises to be a community that can hold me, understand me and inspire me to continue on my pilgrimage of faith. In the spring of 2017, while teaching a Course of Study, God gave me a vision which has provided clarity in how to use the Wesleyan Way of Salvation – both to understand the divisive culture that surrounds us, what I’ve started calling “the wrath,” and to navigate toward and live in God’s alternative culture of shalom. I need the support of companions, such as I’ve found in OSL, as I seek to discern how God is calling me to share this vision. I will finish this letter by describing how the six marks of Lucan Spirituality show up in my life these days.

Though prone to shift particular practices, I have long benefited from setting a LITURGICAL pattern to my days, weeks and years. Presently I am hallowing time through corporate worship on the Lord’s Day, including the Lord’s Supper, with a local Lutheran congregation, as well as regular participation in the daily office with the Hickman Chapter of OSL by zoom. These regular times of gathering and being sent keep me grounded and tied to the communion of

saints. I also have been tending to my habits of frequent individual encounter with the word of God and prayer. This includes breath prayer, baptismal Tai Chi, devotions in motion, journaling, weekly conversations with supportive friends, using the Pray as You Go podcast most days for lectio divina, and periodically taking time to employ my creative side to soak in God’s word. Most recently I made a graphic depiction of the Armor of God described in Ephesians 4, which helps me reflect on how that armor protects and strengthens my head (thoughts), heart (emotions) and loins (gut). This connects to the self-reflection I have been doing using the Enneagram after listening to a podcast that interviewed people such as Richard Rohr and learning a new breath prayer that has me focus on the Spirit of God passing by the base of my brain (sinus cavity), beside my heart (lungs) to my gut (diaphragm) and back out. As I have begun my daily prayer time with this scripture in preparation for doing my adapted version of Baptism Tai Chi, I continue to mull over the “sticky” parts of the scripture for me. Right now, seeing the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit has me stuck because I am so aware of how badly people can be harmed by the use of scripture as a weapon. I’m asking God how I might pick up this sword in a way that does no harm, but does good. Is it possible to pick it up, and then lay it down by the riverside?

I was blessed to be raised in a community of faith whose members were aware and spoke often of God actively at work in their daily lives. So, I learned to recognize the HOLY SPIRIT at work in my life, providing opportunities, inviting me (though never forcing me) to action, and quickening my spirit when I am doing God’s work. This summer I had the opportunity to be on staff for 4 ½ weeks of the local Girl

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## Sr. Sarah Francis: ‘Seeking Justice and Peace’

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Scout camps. In so doing I found a part of myself that I had not engaged in a long while. Also, this fall I am taking new responsibilities as a volunteer Service Unit Manager. I see Girl Scouts as a way to give myself to the girls, and other adult leaders; a kind of ministry that is in harmony with my ordination. Here in Western PA, which is greatly polarized in blue and red, I see the opportunity to create some purple. Working with several troops and their leaders, as well as the paid Council staff, I see the similarity to the work of circuit riders who worked with several class meetings. The camps have some similar potentials as camp meetings had in shaping a counter culture of peace and justice. I have even

adapted the Baptismal Tai Chi into a “Friendship Circle” Tai Chi, and adapted grace (which the progressive camp staff had discarded) to voice gratitude without naming God – with hope that these liturgical patterns might be embraced by some who would check “None” on a Gallup poll. I feel the Spirit inviting me to use these opportunities, conversations and experiences to learn and prepare better for the calling of my ordination to assist in breathing life into dry bones of the Church in North America. I was not intending for so much of my life energy to be given to Girl Scouts, but I truly sense the Spirit leading me this way, so I’m following – even as I am discerning what other work God has for me (Course of Study, engagement with my Annual Conference, work as a member of the Historical Society of the UMC, resuming my experiment of making online worship based on the Baptismal Tai Chi, and Facebook Live Devotions in Motion).

My Methodist parents and grandparents taught me early to orient to the MARGINS of society. This includes practices of hospitality, generosity, and seeing all humans as fellow children of God. When I serve the poor and outcast, I am serving Christ (Matt 25). My years at Hampshire College stretched those margins even wider, especially in the areas of sexuality, American racism, religions other than Christianity, being wary of the American military industrial complex, and seeing the ways the Church has been corrupted so that it

My Methodist parents and grandparents taught me early to orient to the MARGINS of society. This includes practices of hospitality, generosity, and seeing all humans as fellow children of God.

often supports and benefits from the dominant culture of domination. The focus of my fourth year was on the Catholic Worker movement in New York City, where I learned about voluntary poverty, personalism, and keeping focused on acts of mercy and acts of justice. In more recent years I have become appreciative of how the early Methodist system of circuit riders and class meetings enabled American Methodists to reach the margins because the clergy embraced voluntary poverty, relying on the hospitality of the siblings they were guiding. As a student of Methodist history, I can see some specific times when our people succumbed to the pressures of the dominant culture, giving up various key elements of our original method in order to be more “respectable.”

At this stage in my life and ministry, when I have not had the benefits of an appointment for over 3 years, I am embracing the freedom I have to move toward the margins. I have been using my PhD to train Local Pastors through the Course of Study. My position at Wesley Seminary is contracted course by course, when they request my services. I have accepted six courses besides liturgy, giving my best work to developing the curriculum for the sake of these pastors and their small congregations. Far greater than the monetary payment I am given, I find my reward is in the contributions I am making to supporting these siblings in Christ who minister on the margins of the UMC, and getting glimpses of the work of God among these people. With my increased involvement in Girl Scouts, I am also mulling over how volunteer organizations of all kinds can help direct resources and support to many people on the margins.

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In my vision, orienting to the margins is synonymous to being COUNTER-CULTURAL. It is the imperial cultures of domination which put many human beings on the margins, while privileging a few. The privileged people of imperial cultures use violent means to force others to do things. In recent years God has been showing me that judging and condemning others, the use of guilt, blame and shame, fear of scarcity, bureaucracy and even rewards are all part of this system of violence. The domination cultures teach us these means of violence from an early age. We are immersed in the culture so it is hard to even recognize the dynamics. The means of violence become ingrained habits. Study of the Enneagram, and internal family systems shows how indi-

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## Sr. Sarah Francis: ‘Seeking Justice and Peace’

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tions, depression and isolation are also developed as attempts to cope with the pain of life in the violent culture. The counter culture of God’s reign is marked by freedom, abundance, trust, vulnerability, curiosity and creativity.

The PROPHETIC charism of God is the ability to see the domination culture for what it is, and proclaim God’s culture of shalom as an alternative. Being prophetic is taking up acts that help people become awake to the reality of the domination culture and the good news that God’s reign is a true and viable alternative. As Brother Daniel indicates in his introduction to the Fourth Edition of the *Book of Offices and Services*, OSL is being called to participate in a fresh awakening. I aim to join my voice with the present herald of Zion.

One fresh understanding I have of this prophetic work is that God is calling us to speak truth when personal relationships or social structures are out of order (doing harm, failing to meet needs) without breaking off connection to the other. The work of God is not to blame or condemn others for their actions or inactions, even as it is to renounce violent means. Followers of the Way would rather “brave the wilderness” than continue to live in bondage in Egypt. The witness of so many martyrs is to say no to abusive power by trusting in the resurrection power of Christ, so that we are no longer swayed by the fear of death. When enough pilgrims exchange violent means for means of grace, the society will change. It also helps to take a posture of curiosity when feelings of anger, shame, aversion or despair well up in ourselves or others. Transformation can only come when we commit to practicing compassion and empathy toward one another and we choose to make changes in what we do because we see how those changes will meet our needs. Also, this transformation/sanctification, takes time and

guidance from those who have found the means of grace to unlearn the habits of wrath and adopt the habits of grace.

It occurs to me that countercultural does not mean monocultural. I find a tension here in OSL when we delight in the “smells and bells” that we’ve incorporated into our Western monastic style worship. Searching for more diversity in worship at the start of 2020, I brought my daughters to an Alliance Church in Pittsburgh. It has a contemporary worship style that does not at all fit the basic pattern we’ve come to appreciate in the UMC. They served Eucharist on Good Friday! Yet, through that church I met some local African American siblings in the faith, a demographic not found in the churches in my town.

I’ve caught myself occasionally doubting whether I belong to OSL sometimes because I don’t frequently use OSL materials for my private prayer. My current busy life doesn’t often afford me the time for a whole morning prayer service, and there are other practices such as devotions in motion and breath prayers that are meaningful to me. I also perceive that the habit may be prohibitive; if someone cannot afford to buy a scapular, or chooses to place their treasure elsewhere, might they not fit in? Likewise, as I think of how I might be a catalyst for more people joining in small prayer groups, I’m aware that the cultures of many on the margins would make it unlikely that they would take to such a formal liturgy as OSL has developed.

I am thankful for the COMMUNAL nature of the Christian life, and that OSL makes this nature clear. I have been blessed to have soulmates of faith through my life, and within OSL, who hold me accountable, and who hold me when I’m struggling. I am thankful that the pandemic has enlighten us as to how we might increase our communal times even while we are dispersed. While the zoom retreat last year was not as great

as being together in person, it was a real blessing to be able to connect as we did. And the Hickman Chapter can attest that we’ve had regular strong attendance on Zoom that we could never duplicate in person. Brother Daniel notes Eucharist at the center of our communion. I experienced that for each meeting of the BU chapter. And curiously now, the weekly Eucharist offered at my local Lutheran church has drawn me to worship with them in person since Pentecost.

Clearly for me, the communal aspect of faith is in some tension with its APOSTOLIC expression. While not quite as spread out as Francis Asbury and other early circuit riders, I have sojourned in so many temporary communities since I went off to college. I don’t think it would be possible for me to just stay in one town, or even one metropolitan area. And with social media I can stay connected with people who matter to me across the globe. As long as I am raising children I do want to be home enough be involved in their lives. And at the same time, I can use the internet to keep connecting with others. From this rose the idea of being a cyber circuit rider. What I most yearn for in this realm is some more regular pattern or cycle of connecting. For Asbury it was dictated by the roads he had to travel as he moved from community to community, house to house, table fellowship to table fellowship. I can talk to in-laws in Nigeria, a friend in Germany and a friend in California all in the same morning if I wish. I find I want to build in some “horse time” [like a circuit rider of old] of solitude and reflection in between encounters. And I need local community. I get a monthly questionnaire and one question is always about how much support I have. Is there someone who could drop everything and help me in a pinch? Do I have enough in-person social time? I need to make sure my

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## Sr. Hilde (Cherlyn) Gates: ‘Peppered’ with the Mystical

My spiritual walk is lightly “peppered” with what some would call mystical experiences. These have occurred when I have been most deeply yearning for connection with God, understanding my call to serve God in all things, struggling with a sense of connectedness and responsibility for God’s creation and accepting my creaturely (physical) flaws and limitations. I am intentional in a daily attitude of prayer, reflecting on the lectionary readings, and being aware that we are all called to be Light Bearers. These are the lenses I look through when I engage with the world, often through chaos or conflict, in solitude or community. My response is often found in written prayers or songs:

*Pray, dear Lord, let your Spirit pour over me.*

*Flush headlines and unholy habits from my heart.*

*Unwelcome maladies, they clutch and cling,*

*Sending me to my knees.*

*Anoint these lesions and loosen their hold.*

*Place healing balm on unrelenting wounds.*

*Wrap your servant in cloths of righteousness*

*And bring me to rest in your house of Holiness.*

*In your time, lift me from your bed of blessing.*

*Raise me to my feet to carry good news and hope,*

*To become your messenger of healing  
And servant to all.*

As to Living for the Church of Jesus Christ:

In the hymn “One Bread, One Body” we sing of the singular Lordship of Jesus Christ. I was raised in the Methodist Church and embrace all that entails; my understanding of



**Sr. Hilde (Cherlyn) Gates and Br. Brendan (Dwight) Vogel.**

God’s means of grace and what it means to serve others sacrificially, I am a justice-seeker and advocate in both word and deed for those who suffer, including Creation. I worshiped with Fisk Memorial UMC in Natick, MA for over 40 years and have served in leadership, including ordination in the Order of Deacon. Now located in Towson, MD I worship with Providence UMC, again leading bible study, liturgy and preaching from time to time. During the summer months I worship when able with Christ Episcopal Church in Norway, ME. When invited, I create worship visuals and centers, using fabrics, candles and natural elements to enhance the liturgy and develop ritual in the life of the community.

I am comfortable in most Christian settings and in nature. As long as Christ and Holy Scripture are at the center of the community I am at home.

As to Seeking the Sacramental Life:

I believe in God the Creator, Christ the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit as our Comforter. To live sacramentally is to honor this Holy Trinity through an active prayer life, study of scripture and a dedication to being both the “letter of Christ” and the “letter bearer of Christ.” To live for Christ is to bear witness to all

that God is doing in the world and to respond by loving the world in return. I take seriously the commandment to keep the Sabbath. We not only have the need to rest but it is a Christian responsibility. I have studied the meaning of and offered retreats on “Sabbath” as a rhythm of being and doing in a Holy and holistic way. To keep Sabbath means to cease – rest – fast – feast and repeat. This weekly time set apart is one of my spiritual practices along with prayer, journaling and art as well as playing a Native American style flute.

As to Promoting the Corporate Worship of the Church:

Worship is at its core the work of the people. I believe it is participatory to the greatest extent possible and is not a spectator sport. At the same time I believe worship must be done well. Preachers should prepare well, Choirs should rehearse well and Liturgists should prepare their readings well. Worship should be grounded in the traditions of the church, including invoking the Spirit of God, adoring the Spirit of God by lighting candles, dressing altars and offering words of gratitude. I believe in proclaiming the Word of God through excellent preaching and reading of scripture, celebrating the Spirit of God through music and singing our faith through song. I believe worship should bring the whole body of Christ to bear on the community through the sharing of Holy Communion for the transformation of our lives within the church and further in the world. I believe our worship should be a reflection of our cultural context, offering up our current concerns and not ignoring the pain and suffering in our midst. Worship should be offered with integrity, with inclusion and with a clear conscience. “Come with a clean heart and with soil on your hands. Bless me with your prayers and my people with your toil. Come with a clean heart and with soil on your hands.” This was one of Spirit’s whispers to my listen-

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# Sr. Hilde (Cherlyn) Gates: ‘Peppered’ with the Mystical

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ing ear, as I played my flute for the Lord.

As to Magnifying the Sacraments:

I spent a week in retreat at Glastonbury Abbey, a Benedictine Community in Hingham, MA. I immersed myself in the daily office and silence. It was during a noon prayer when the Eucharist became transformed for and in me. As I took the wafer and sipped the wine the Lord’s Spirit whispered to my ear, “Just so I am completed in you.” Those words of blessing are ever present whenever, wherever and however I share in the Eucharist. So moved was I by that singular whisper that I found myself meditating on the Eucharistic promise during one of our chapter retreats at Emery House. It was after the noon service. The presiding priest returned the Lord’s Table to order including sweeping the crumbs from the surface. This was the culminating service of our time together and while the brothers exited the small chapel, I remained behind and continued to stare at the table. Several of my OSL siblings remained behind with me knowing that I had been struggling with the intimacy of the ritual of Communion. After a period of silence I felt compelled to approach the table, lay my cheek on the cloth and stretch out my arms. Please know I do not share this story often or lightly but it is a defining experience in my journey of sanctifying grace. After some time I moved to the back of the table, fell to my knees and finally laid down beneath the table and wept. The re-telling of this event, even in this moment, brings me to tears. My response to this intangible encounter with Christ ultimately came over the course of a few weeks in the form of the following poem, “An Embrace of Grace,” which was published on the General Board of Discipleship by Br. Daniel Benedict.

## An Embrace of Grace

by Cheryl Gates, OSL

The Body of Christ, honey sweet and dry  
Coarse grains finding places to hide in the mouth  
as if to linger, too much to swallow yet leaving me wanting more.

The Blood of Christ, burning on lips and tongue  
Binding to sweet crumbs, softening and swelling.  
“Just so, I am completed in you.”

Singing in silence, wanting to touch and be touched,  
Accepting the unity and solitude of the encounter,  
I retreat from the table to lift a word of thanksgiving.

It is finished. The table is cleared.  
The candles are extinguished.  
All settles into a silence and a waiting.

Before this emptied table I bend the knee of my heart.  
Encouraged by a cloud of witnesses I dare to lean.  
Forgive me for I know not what I do.

Like an embrace of grace, the Beloved offers forgiveness to the lover.  
Pure white atop penitential purple, the cloths lie still.  
I quietly kiss the place where the body once lay. But where have they taken it?

My burning cheek presses against the spot, still warmed by Holy presence.  
My lips ache to kiss the feet, to kiss the hands.  
Arms outstretched, I long to receive the kiss of the mouth.

But the sacrifice, so carefully consumed, leaves no trace but my tears.  
Turning from the table, my fingers curl to fists,  
To stifle ageless moans of longing.

I kneel. I sit. I lift the skirts of the table and lie beneath it.  
Arms outstretched, again I weep, for even here I find no kisses, no crumbs.  
The empty table holds me captive until the Beloved returns.

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## Sr. Sarah Francis: ‘Seeking Justice and Peace’

in a pinch? Do I have enough in-person social time? I need to make sure my focus outward keeps me from building relationships in my neighborhood.

This is a pretty long letter now, and I’ve worked on it for nearly a week. I

hope it matches the seriousness with which life vows in the Order presupposes.

Grace and Peace,  
Sr. Sarah

## Sr. Mary Balinda (Dianne) Tobey Covault

“Due to the sensitive and personal nature of my testimony, I prefer that it not be shared in print at this time.”

# The Church after Vax: Great Awakening or Continued Hospice?

By Br. W. "Terry" Van Hook, OSL

Our extended homebound time will soon end. The Christian movement will all too quickly face another major disruption as it moves from a technology dependent state into the new culture formed by the pandemic.

As we struggle to "return to normal", we need to ask "What parts of normal will help, what parts will hinder our future?" There are predictions of another "Roaring '20s" as social gatherings mushroom, the economy booms, and the culture celebrates the "end of Covid."

Lasting changes will be sorted out regarding working at home, doctor's visits, Internet shopping and home delivery, along with a new emphasis on the core values of family and relationships, and the importance of one's neighborhood.

Classic questions about life and its meaning are already bubbling up as people seek hope, deeper understanding and reliable sources of eternal truths. The churches are likely to see a major surge in regular attendance. Most will be caught unawares by these changes.

Unfortunately, the Church has become increasingly marginalized on many critical issues. Black Lives Matter and global warming are but two clear examples among the very serious concerns of today that do not have a significant church relationship. The recent elections reveal that even the highly publicized evangelical church is losing credibility.

Once the Covid-19 vaccines are widespread, our churches will have some major self-critical work to do and life deciding decisions to make. Will we return to our "hospice" mode of the past few decades? .....or will something new breakthrough and provide real revival of the basic Christian Gospel, of the "Good News" spoken by Christ?

Time and time again, God has shown that the Judean-Christian movement can be reborn and become vital again by discovering the gift of a deep engagement



*Photo by Daniel Schludi on Unsplash*

**Once the Covid-19 vaccines are widespread, our churches will have some major self-critical work to do and life deciding decisions to make.**

with God and God's will. We know that such a revival is in God's will, but is it in ours?

In order for another "Great Awakening" to happen, our churches need to consider not just the immediate and attractive "tactics" that usually consist of Program ideas, Catchy slogans and attractive events, but the real and substantive engagement with the Gospel and its meaning for the 21st Century.

All too often these tactics (events and activities) take precedence over a prayerful and well thought out strategy needed for long lasting change and rebirth. Even less considered is the vital, on-going struggle with the theology of the gospel and the role theology has to illuminate, reflect and call us into a deeper understanding and resultant action of a relationship with God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

With that in mind, I have been exploring with others a "TST Small Group Network" (Theology / Strategy / Tactics) to bring clergy and lay leaders together in an effort to "crowd source" the movement of the Holy Spirit in our post Covid season.

Meeting weekly, it will endeavor to keep Theology, Strategy and Tactics in a dynamic balance, sharing insights, ideas and inspirations to identify what is needed to be kept and what is needed to change in this time of great change and great opportunity.

The format is like a TED talk, with a considered input for the week, but then followed by a serious discussion of questions, thoughts and ideas the initial speaker sparked among the participants. Attendance would be limited to 5-8 in order to encourage full participation within a 60 minute time frame.

The Order of Saint Luke, with its history of study, reflection and action, could easily become a place where the embers of this spirit could be examined, encouraged and shared with the church at large.

*\*This article was originally published in "e-Soundings," a blog written by W. Terry Van Hook. See details at [www.agapejourneys.com](http://www.agapejourneys.com)*

Br. Terry Van Hook is a recently retired Elder of the Cal-Pac Annual Conference of the United Methodist after 48 years of ministry. He first joined the Order of Saint Luke in 1981 through the Cal-Pac Chapter. A major interest of his has been the recruitment, formation and spiritual growth of new clergy and lay leaders.