



EPISCOPAL CHURCH of the  
**HEAVENLY REST**  
God's Love. For All.

# *Lay Reader*

PENTECOST · VOLUME 12, ISSUE 4 · ABILENE, TEXAS



## From The Rector



### In it together . . . – David Romanik

Over the last several years, the curriculum for Heavenly Rest's Vacation Bible School has been inspired by a book illustrated by the featured artist at Abilene's Children's Art and Literacy Festival (C.A.L.F.). This year's C.A.L.F. artist is a California-based illustrator named LeUyen Pham, and the book that has inspired our VBS curriculum is "Bear Came Along," illustrated by LeUyen and written by Richard T. Morris. The book describes (and illustrates) a river that didn't know it was a river until a bear came along and fell into the flowing water. By the same token, the curious bear didn't realize he was on an adventure until a frog hopped on. The lonely frog didn't know she had friends until the turtles showed up, and so on. Eventually, the party floating down the river includes a bear, a frog, two turtles, a beaver, two raccoons, and a duck. As the animals join the journey, each contributes to the group something essential that was missing, something only that animal could provide. It is along the journey, in other words, that the animals discover the ways they need each other. The final words of the book summarize this point well: "So many different animals living their separate lives, but they didn't know they were in it together until the river came along."

As we discussed this deceptively simple book, we couldn't help but think about St. Paul's description of the Church as the Body of Christ in the first letter to the Corinthians. From what we can tell, the church in Corinth was plagued by divisions. Members of the church disagreed about numerous issues, and it seems that many thought it might be easier if they could ignore or get rid of the people who disagreed with them. Throughout the letter, Paul exposes the folly of this thinking, but nowhere is his point clearer than in chapter 12, when the apostle compares the Church to a body: "Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it," he explains. This observation has significant implications for the way we relate to one another. We are connected in ways that we cannot fully understand. Moreover, the idea of ignoring or getting rid of another part of the body makes no sense. After all, "the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'" We need each other, even if we cannot immediately perceive how that might be the case. The idea of pushing each other away because of our disagreements makes no theological sense to Paul. In Paul's ecclesiology, the Church cannot fully be the Church unless we are all at the table. To put it another way, Paul's understanding of the Church assumes that we need each other, even though we see the world in dramatically different ways.

This is arguably one of the most radical assumptions of our faith. We live in a world in which community is often contingent. Group membership tends to be determined by a series of preferences or identity markers: who we are, where we come from, what we value, how we vote, etc.

By contrast, the Church is a different kind of community. Our primary identity is that we are persons created in the image of God. In this sense, our unity is not found in the ways that we agree, but in the radical commonality of our shared humanity. The Church is a community where we come together from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives, and do our very best to love one another, no matter how challenging that might feel at times. As the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes in "Life Together," "the person who loves those around them will create community." We do this not just because it makes us feel good, or because it is the "nice" thing to do, but because, according to Paul, our lives are incomplete without each other. My prayer is that, no matter where life takes us, we will remember and cherish this central message of our faith.

***"the Church  
cannot be fully  
the Church  
unless we all  
are at the  
table"***

*You are most welcome to help out at VBS as we share this message of love and community with the children of this parish! Vacation Bible School will meet Monday through Wednesday, June 3-5, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Contact Carol Ann Weston (cweston@heavenlyrestabilene.org) or Amanda Harbaugh (astokes414@gmail.com) if you would like to help or have any questions.*



## Coming This Summer: Sunday Mornings at Heavenly Rest

– Corrie Cables

As we bid adieu to Exploring Spiritual Treasure, it's time to learn more about the best kept secrets on Sunday mornings for grown ups at Heavenly Rest.

### **Preaching the Good Word (9:15 am Bishop Garrett Room)**

Each Sunday, we explore the Bible readings that you will hear during worship. It's a chance to slow down and savor scripture in community. Join this clergy-led conversation anytime. We will read through each Sunday lesson from the Old Testament, Psalm, New Testament, and Gospel. It's an opportunity to see how the Bible still speaks to our lives and the world around us. All are welcome and you do not need to be a Bible scholar to enjoy this class.

### **Sunday Book Study (9:15 am Gen Von Ende Room)**

Grab a cup of coffee and join us for a casual book study this summer. Starting with Anne LaMott's "Traveling Mercies," we are now looking towards choosing our next title. There's no preparation for the class, and you can stop by anytime, regardless of reading the book or not. It's a time to share the holy moments of our week over excerpts from books that speak to the soul. Develop deep friendships and gather with adults of all ages for this study.

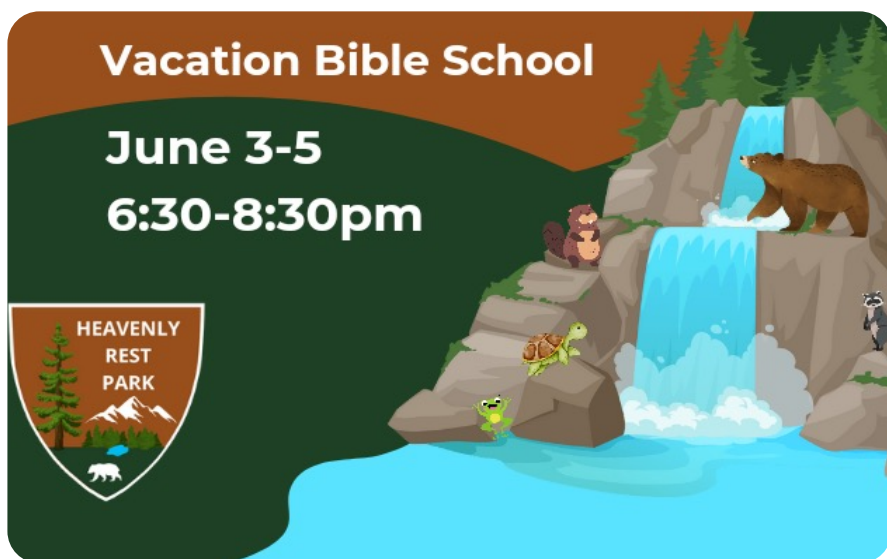
*Have a great idea for a Sunday morning class for adults? Reach out to a clergy person about your thoughts for a summer class at Heavenly Rest.*





## Family Vacation Bible School

- Carol Ann Weston, *Director of Family Ministries*



*Scan the QR code to  
register for VBS!*

**WHAT: Family Vacation Bible School - Heavenly Rest Park.** Bible Stories, Crafts, Games, Music, Snacks, and More! Join us for fun and fellowship as we explore what it means to be the body of Christ living and working in unity. Each family or group will stay together and join with others to participate.

**WHO:** The Whole Family or a Group of Mixed Ages  
Children who attend without an adult will join another family/group.  
\*\*Please be sure that all children are brought to check-in by an adult.

**WHEN:** June 3-5, 2024; Monday – Wednesday; 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**COST:** There is NO cost, but space is limited, so please register as soon as possible!

**REGISTER:** Online at <https://heavenlyrestabilene.churchcenter.com/registrations/events>  
Choose "1" rather than the number of people to register as a family or group. You will be able to add info about individuals in your group or family.

For more information, contact Carol Ann Weston, Director of Children and Family Ministries [cweston@heavenlyrestabilene.org](mailto:cweston@heavenlyrestabilene.org) or (325) 677-2091 or Amanda Harbaugh, VBS Director, [astokes414@gmail.com](mailto:astokes414@gmail.com).



## Service Sundays for Children and Youth

**June 9, 16, 23, and 30, 9:15-10:15 a.m.**

During June, we are planning Service Sundays for 4-year-olds through High School. We also welcome any parents or guardians who would like to attend. We will begin upstairs in the Parish House and participate in a service activity, followed by some fun. June 2 we will be decorating and setting up for Vacation Bible School in Gerhart Hall. On June 9th, we will be serving with the Altar Guild to set up for the worship service. Gay Ann Walts and her team will be leading us.

Other activities will include assembling children's snack bags and making cards for Friday Outreach, baking cookies then setting up reception, and more!



## Mark Your Fall Calendars!

August 7 | Game Night for All Ages - Gerhart Hall - bring games and finger foods to share!

August 11 | Back to School Bash

August 18 | First Day of Sunday School for Children & Youth, Bible Blast for 3rd graders

August 24 | Parent Party

September 4 | Rally Night

September 8 | E.S.T. Begins

September 11 | Wednesday Night Meals and Programs Resume



## Youth & Adult Family Vacation Bible School Helpers Needed!

*Last year we had 111 children and adult participants, and we expect more this year. That takes a lot of adult and youth leaders and helpers!*

### 8 reasons you should volunteer

- Jesus said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these....you did for me." (Matthew 25:40). When you are helping with registration, leading a group, or helping in any way, you are doing it for and with Jesus.
- You will meet other volunteers and make connections with new people. Serving together is a great way to start new friendships with people already in your church.
- At VBS, you are guaranteed to get some good exercise! Between doing the movements to the VBS songs and moving between rotations, you are sure to get your steps in!
- VBS allows you to be a part of sharing the Gospel with children and their families.
- Snacks and Wednesday S'mores and hot dogs!
- You might learn something new and be reminded of important truths.
- Get to know children and their families as you sing, laugh, learn, and play together.

### How can YOU help?

- **Registration and Sign-in** - help at the Registration table or lead groups to their assigned tables.
- **Canteen Assistant** - put water and snacks in cups and place them on tables for closing.
- **Park Ranger** - assist with leading one of the rotations: Lesson, Games, or Craft.
- **Trail Guide** - help at the Registration table or lead groups to their assigned tables.
- **Translator** - Assist Park Rangers by translating from English to Swahili as needed.



This is a wonderful opportunity to serve the families of our morning and afternoon congregations and the community for just a couple of hours for 3 evenings. Sign up at <https://heavenlyrestabilene.churchcenter.com/registrations/events>

*Scan the QR code to help with VBS!*





## The Season after Pentecost - An Exciting Journey!

- Amanda Watson

Mole and Boy sit down in front of a vast, expansive plain. Boy asks, “What is that over there?” Mole answers, “It’s the wild.”

Pentecost is like that -- a great, open, inviting, expansive plain. It is a perfect image or metaphor for God’s love, a love that is huge, expansive, and majestic. Pentecost is a time to get up and journey into the wonder of God’s love. In 1 John, we learn this: “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God, everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” During Pentecost, we stop sitting and looking and journey into this great expanse of God’s love. In this journey, the fields will be filled with beauty that will cause our hearts to soar. The mountains will be challenging to climb. Throughout the journey, we discover more and more the revelation of God’s love, for we are God’s beloved, and when we love our brothers and sisters in thanksgiving for that love, we realize “everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” (1John 4: 8)

On this journey through the hills and valleys, flowing water, rocks, and trees of this great expanse of Pentecost, we are empowered by the Spirit. “No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, because he has given us of his spirit.” (1 John 4:11). As we begin this journey of Pentecost, we first must realize that we are in a threshold, that thin place where the old and the new come together. Christine Valters Paintner names these encounters as wild holy places into which we go to “embrace a fertile and wide expanse of possibility.”

This journey reminds me of the story of Abraham. God said to Abram, “Go,” and Abram went. But it was not until Abram was an old man that God made a covenant with him, “I will make you exceedingly numerous... I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.” Just when Abram and Sarai are too old, God sends them again. God confirmed their transformation, changing their names to Abraham and Sarah. Unexpectedly, God sends us on the journey, but God always has “our backs.”

Abraham must have asked himself, “Are you kidding me? Another journey at my age!” We, too, may ask the same question as we enter this journey of Pentecost. Yet, we always know that when we walk in front of God, God is always with us. And just as for Abraham, God gives us no path; God provides us with a way. We must love each other and prepare for all the wonder before us. We must be prepared for our transformation as we allow God to herd us from behind to seek and find what God has already planned for us to see and become.

We cannot begin the journey into this wild, majestic, numinous\* plain without recalling Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s refrain, “Go, love, and change the world.”

*\*Numinous is a wonderful word for Pentecost. It means having a deep spiritual quality or connection. May you have a numinous Pentecost!*





## Spring Semester Wrap Up

- Luke Mendez

Wow, this spring semester has absolutely flown by, and it's been nothing short of amazing with all of your Youth and the Volunteers! We've dived into some deep conversations, whipped up some delicious meals together, and shared loads of laughs along the way. Our Sunday nights have truly been the highlight of my week, with prayer, learning, and just building our community. I'm super grateful to be your Youth Coordinator and can't wait for all the awesome things we've got planned next! Make sure you check out what Meg and Ronnie have to say about our Sunday morning sessions in the update below! -Luke Mendez



"It has been a pleasure helping with youth Sunday school this year. The kids have been great and we have really come a long way in our knowledge of the Bible. We have put a lot of effort into relating the lesson to our lives and how we can incorporate God into our daily lives and what it means to "love thy neighbor as ourselves." Luke has done a great job creating a cozy and inviting atmosphere into the room." -Meg and Ronnie Garcia

### *Summer Schedule*

- **June 2nd**, Youth Night + Youth Serve, VBS decorating 5-6:45pm
- **June 3rd-6th**, VBS, Youth are encouraged to come and help! 6:30pm-8:30pm
- **June 9th**, Youth Nights, Summer Kick-Off & Cook-Out
- **June 15th**, Youth Summer Nights, Pool Party! 6pm-8pm
  - **June 16th**, Youth Summer Nights, 5-6:45pm
  - **June 23rd**, Youth Summer Nights, 5-6:45pm

*Be on the lookout for more youth events in July and August!*





# On Sacred Ground

– Doug Thomas

barefoot bidden by Holy hidden  
basking in the light  
standing clueless  
shoeless on sacred ground  
shaking quaking his confidence breaking  
feeling reeling reduced to kneeling  
his x-rayed soul took flight  
as his hand shook leper white

how could this water-hidden babe  
who'd lost his place of might  
and wandered years in fright  
transport to this dry mount this night  
to hear the voice of silence speak  
riven driven by thirst then given  
grace to strengthen his sight

fearfully tearfully drawing more near-fully  
pleas and placations denied  
conscripted then lifted from life that had drifted  
accepting the Other's side  
his chosen heart unfrozen  
by love for a dozen tribes

on sacred ground our cause is found  
that lead us to the light  
it teases then pleases it stresses then blesses  
our journey through the night  
where we become the kind of son  
or daughter that defends  
the destitute and will refute  
all superficial right  
proclaim with praise the desert ways  
that teach us all is One



# A Pentecost for All People

– Karen Boyd

On May 2nd we celebrated National Day of Prayer at the Center for Contemporary Arts. This observance is celebrated on the first Thursday in May every year. This day was set aside by Congress for prayer and meditation. They rightly concluded that it is an important part of the spiritual lives of many religions and provides comfort in times of need.

This was truly a beautiful experience to be in the presence of so many prayers to a God whom we call by different names; God, Allah, Adonai, and many others. This year's observance opened with our group entering into the day's stream of prayers of thousands of others with a few moments of stillness and contemplation. We listened to many prayers for peace, for the health of this world, and love for the whole human family.

One gentleman offered a Hindu prayer. One woman, a Muslim, offered a beautiful chant of Sura 1, the first prayer in the Qur'an. Another woman from the Native American tradition offered an Algonquin song to water, explaining that our bodies are about 60% water, that many conflicts in our world are over water and water rights, and that water is necessary for life. Christianity was represented by Roman Catholics, Protestants, Latter-Day Saints, and Episcopalians. Afterwards, we broke bread together, literally, with three loaves of baked especially for this event by a member of Temple Mizpah.

As I reflected on this experience, I began to think of the story from the Book of Acts, where the disciples were in a room all together, and the Holy Spirit came in with a whoosh. The Apostles began to speak, and all of the people in Jerusalem heard them speak in their tongues and understood what they were saying. This, of course, is the story of Pentecost.

Jesus, shortly before his death, gave us a new commandment, that we love one another as he loved us. We've heard this (and loved this!) so very many times before. But to love as Jesus loved means being willing to lay down our lives for one another. Being willing to die is a supreme form of sacrifice, but what about being willing to let our assumptions about those who do not look, think, act, believe, or live as we do, die so that we might look with wonder and love on all. Maybe this death of opinions and judgment is love in action. Love to change the world.

As Christians, we pray for the day when we will all be united under the banner of the Prince of Peace, but that time is not yet. Until then, we must embrace ecumenism and love others, all others as Jesus commanded.







## OLIVIA CABES

Dear Parish Family,

I am very grateful to be a recipient of the Dan Abbott scholarship. This feels like an extension of the love I've received at Heavenly Rest. I'll be studying finance at ACU and look forward to continuing to be an active member at Heavenly Rest. This generous scholarship not only affirms my hard work and service in the community, but also motivates me to excel and give back in the future.

Thank you,  
Olivia Cabes



## KOLBY ANDERSON

Hello,

I will be attending Texas A&M next fall with a major of engineering. At school, I am involved in NHS and the current events team. At least once a month, I serve as an acolyte— a position that I'm proud to hold. This scholarship will go a long way in paying for school, it will definitely help in that respect.

Thank you,  
Kolby Anderson







# Congratulations to our Graduates!



**Kathryn Anderson**  
WHS



**Kayden Kevil**  
ASU



**Kaley Rutledge**  
CHS



**Kolby Anderson**  
WHS



**Hawa Mukyombwe**  
AHS



**Luke Mendez**  
McM



**Jackson Young**  
McM



**Aislinn Luther**  
ACU



**Ryan Young**  
ACU



**Austin Hackel**  
ACU



**Lawi Mfaume**  
AHS



**Olivia Cables**  
AHS



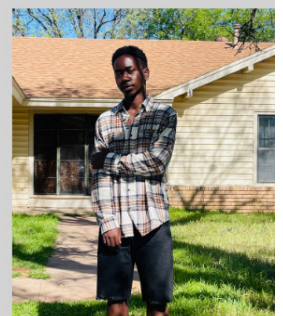
**Melody Brown**  
ACU



**Luke Teten**  
WHS



**Caleb Queen**  
ACU



**David Masha**  
AHS





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## THE DIOCESE OF NORTHWEST TEXAS

The Right Reverend J. Scott Mayer, *Bishop*

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The Reverend David Romanik, *Rector*

The Reverend Corrie Cabes, *Associate Rector*

The Reverend Amanda Watson, *Assistant Rector for Community Life*

The Reverend Doug Thomas, *Priest in Residence*

The Reverend Karen Boyd, *Deacon*

The Reverend Dr. Russell Dickerson, *Deacon*

Bikole Mulanda, *Swahili Minister*

Thomas Pavlechko, *Organist and Director of Music*

Carol Ann Weston, *Director of Family Ministries*

Luke Mendez, *Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministries*

Steve Gibbs, *Parish Coordinator*

LeighAnna Morris, *Parish Accountant*

Melody Brown, *Website Manager*

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Adrian Smith, *Assistant Sexton*

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Anne Jones, *Nursery Manager*

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has arrived!**

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