



EPISCOPAL CHURCH of the
HEAVENLY REST

God's Love. For All.

Lay Reader

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From The Rector



The Great Cloud of Witnesses

David Romanik

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

Hebrews 12:1-2

Every year at the end of the Maundy Thursday service, the acolytes, Eucharistic Ministers, and clergy remove all the adornments from the chancel. Known as the “stripping of the altar,” this somber and beautiful ritual symbolizes the abandonment of Jesus by those closest to him, as well as embodying one of the verses of Psalm 22, which is generally chanted during the ceremony: “they divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.” On Good Friday, the altar remains empty: a stark testament to the terrifying mystery of God crucified. Indeed, the sanctuary is bare until just after the Holy Saturday Liturgy the following morning, when the Altar Guild starts putting everything back into place for the Great Vigil of Easter later that evening. One of my favorite tasks of the year is to assist the Altar Guild in this enterprise. There is something inherently joyful about the process: it feels like we are bringing the chancel back to life as we prepare to proclaim and celebrate the resurrection.

At some point during the process of reassembling the Nave, we have to place the altar cushions in their correct locations (need I point out that each cushion has a very specific place?). The cushions around the main altar feature the emblems of the twelve apostles, and are identified accordingly when they are being arranged. Meanwhile, the cushions in the chapel depict Texas wildflowers, and are identified according to the person in whose memory the cushion was given. Thus, when we put the main altar back together, one will hear people say things like, “Does anybody know where St. Matthew goes?” or “We put St. Bartholomew in the wrong place!” On the other hand, when we replace the cushions around the chapel altar, people ask about where they should place “Shelba Hollingshead” or “Will and Vera Minter.”

On one level, there is something faintly amusing about mentioning the great saints of the universal Church in the same breath as some of the significant figures from Heavenly Rest’s past: it’s almost as if they know each other! On another level, one could make the argument that this is exactly what the Church is. For the faithful, those who have gone before us continue to be present, sometimes in very tangible ways. Our connection to our ancestors in the faith is not limited to those we knew personally; we are, as the Scripture says, surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, who continue to support and inspire us in our earthly journeys. Moreover, this connection between the “main altar people” and the “chapel altar people” reminds us of our common call to sainthood. The saints are not simply those who died for their faith or knew Jesus during his earthly ministry. Nor were the saints people who behaved perfectly throughout their lives. Rather, the saints were those whose lives were transformed and animated by a profound sense of God’s grace. I suspect that we have all known people like this, some of whom are memorialized on cushions in the chapel, and others whom we remember in our hearts.

One of the ways we acknowledge and celebrate this communion of the saints is by telling their stories: not only stories of those “main altar people,” the heroes of the faith that everyone knows, but also stories of the “chapel altar people,” those people who quietly made a difference in the lives of the people around them. As we enter this season of the church year when we celebrate the saints, I pray we will take the time to tell the stories of all the saints who have gone before us, whether they can be found at the main altar, the chapel altar, or in the quiet of our hearts.



Christian Formation at Heavenly Rest

Ashley Powers

For so much of my educational experience, I felt as though the purpose of learning was to collect facts and knowledge I didn't previously have. I would hoard that information whenever people "smarter" than me dished it out and felt pressure to be ready to recall any fact or piece of information at a moment's notice to prove my worth. The goal was to Ace a test, to make sure I always received good feedback, and do my best to make sure I was never wrong or lacking knowledge, because that was intrinsically tied to my value and worth as a student and a person. Thus, a perfectionist was formed! I have spent a lot of time and energy trying to recover from this affliction, but because I haven't attained perfection, I can't even beat perfection... perfectly. Go figure! I am certain I am not alone in that struggle.

I also know so many wonderful people for whom education was where they found out they were "different:" where their creativity or thought patterns diverged from the norm, and instead of being developed and used as gifts, were punished and stifled. Questioning was frowned upon. Active bodies were told to always sit still. Worth was tied to how much you could mask the parts of yourself that differed from what worked for traditional education settings. All of which leaves people feeling isolated and exhausted. And the church historically has not escaped these expectations but has used them to establish uniform behavior and belief in its members. However, as I and many others have experienced in the Episcopal Church (and especially here at Heavenly Rest), we have experienced a form of Christian education that is deeply rooted in curiosity and grace. We are invited to show up as we are. Our questions are encouraged and welcomed. Our life experiences are shared and valued. We are celebrated for the ways we bring different knowledge and perspectives to conversations. We are encouraged to ask the hard questions, and we respond to mystery and uncertainty with the curiosity and grace of people on a journey with God.

In our Christian formation classes at Heavenly Rest, people experience a shared desire to learn about God, but they also discover a space where perfection or conformity are not the price of entry. The result of this is Christian formation that feels exciting, open, and gracious for everyone who comes with a desire to grow in Christ, to form deep and lasting relationships, and create opportunities for discovery and transformation over the course of our lives. Our classes are well attended and people come back year after year for these reasons! Lives are changed and formed in ways that feel like the love of Christ we read about in the Gospels, and it shows. I am very proud to serve in a church where I can see and experience this kind of formation, and we want you to be a part of it if you aren't already!

So come join us on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings! Be ready to ask questions, listen, learn, make friends, share ideas, eat a lot of great food, and continue to form into the wonderfully special person God is calling you to be.

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

Here is what some of our current attendees have to say about their classes!

Charlotte Harbaugh (Godly Play) "I really like the story, the art area that has lots of things that you can use for projects, and the desert box. I also like the Gathering Time whenever we sing the songs and say hi to our friends. Basically, I like everything about Sunday School!"

Jack Craig (Grades 3-5) "Sunday School is a way to connect with God by teachings. But it is fun at the same time."



Lucy Craig (Middle School) "I love my Sunday School class so much! It is one of my favorite parts of the week; I get to see some of my best friends and the best teachers ever. My favorite thing we do is when we make a craft to represent what we learned that Sunday. I will miss Sunday School and everyone at Heavenly Rest so much!"

Shepherd Gensic (High School) "The youth has been a very fun thing for me. It is a safe place to speak your mind and meet new people. I have learned a lot about the Bible there. I hope others will choose to join."

Jordan Casey (Coffee Talks) "I love that Mark gives us different types of religions to learn about! Also, we can talk with everyone on their thoughts."

Lisa Wiggins (Exploring Spiritual Treasure) "In some ways I felt like a bird in spiritual migration, navigating my way through shifting seasons of belief. But our experience in EST showed us that Heavenly Rest is a soft place to land. We feel welcomed to stretch and grow our spirituality within this incredibly hospitable community."

A Morning Prayer

Doug Thomas

Thank you Father for this day and all You freely give;
a day designed within Your plan and given us to live.
My all our thoughts and words and deeds
bring glory to Your name,
and may we touch some lives with grace
sufficient for their gain.





Consecration Sunday

Jen Rogers

“We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources God has given you – your energy, your prayers, and your money – in this work to which God has called us.” – Henri Nouwen

One of my earliest church memories centered around a gallon pickle jar. In the months and weeks leading up to our mission Sunday, we heard about communities across the globe, the work that God was doing in that space and we were invited to be a part. As a small child with no transferrable skills (yet!) and no income - the ways that I could contribute were limited. In the Rogers household, we got a gallon pickle jar where my younger brother and I could collect change. I am sure we scoured the ground looking for lost coins, commandeered change left over from a purchase our parents made, and asked those we knew to contribute to our cause. Over the days, weeks and months, the jar slowly but surely was filled through the top. When the mission Sunday arrived, I (with help from my parents) proudly carried the pickle jar down the aisle and placed it aside pennies, nickels, dimes, dollar bills and checks. Our gifts were joined together to be a part of the work to which God had called us - in part of the work we would never see first-hand and in a part of the world, where most of us would never go.

As a kid walking up that aisle with the gallon jar, I was already the recipient of the generosity of others in the room and of generations of those who had come before. I was standing in a sanctuary that was envisioned and built by people before I was born. Years before, just down the hall, women held me as a baby and sang songs of faith over me and my friends. I continued to grow, the community continued to pray over my life, teach our classes, share meals around a table and include me in the full life of faith.

When we talk about stewardship here at Heavenly Rest, in the words of Henri Nouwen, “we are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources God has given you – your energy, your prayers, and your money - in this work to which God has called us.” Because we believe that part of the way we live out our faith is by finding ways to join in with the work of God in our community. That will look different for each of us – and will probably look different in different seasons of our lives. We hope that Heavenly Rest is both a place where you can experience the work of God through the gifts of others and that you and your gifts are a way in which others can experience the work of God in their lives.

The Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest is dedicated to serving and creating community by proclaiming the good news of God’s love for all. It takes all of us, joining our gifts together, to carry out this work of God within our community.

On November 16th, we will Celebrate Consecration Sunday in our services and then with a communal meal after the 10:30 service. At its heart, stewardship is about acknowledging the gifts we have received from God and the Church and then discerning the ways we will respond. It is about ensuring that Heavenly Rest remains a place where people can experience the good news of God’s love for all. As you discern your financial gift to Heavenly Rest for the coming year, be assured, that giving any amount makes a difference. Moreover, think of your pledge as a reflection of the gifts you have experienced in this place, and as an expression of your commitment to share your gifts in this community and beyond.



Chamber Music Concert Series

Sunday, October 19, 6:00 pm

Come and welcome back Organist/Harpsichordist Scott Dettra featured this season on Piano Sunday, October 19 at 6:00 pm. Dettra will take us back to the turn of the 20th century to explore the world of Ragtime — America's first popular music — in a solo piano recital featuring music by Scott Joplin and his circle, as well as modern piano rags written since the Ragtime Revival of the 1970s.

Scott Dettra is acclaimed as one of America's outstanding concert organ virtuosos. Hailed as a "brilliant organist" (Dallas Morning News), and an "outstanding musician" (The Diapason), his playing is known for its clarity, rhythmic intensity, and musical elegance, and has been described by The American Organist as "music making of absolute authority and sophisticated expression." In addition to his work as an organ soloist, Mr. Dettra is a ragtime pianist, director of the period-instrument group Ensemble XIV, and organist for The Crossing, the multi-Grammy-winning professional chamber choir based in Philadelphia.

Throughout 2022, Mr. Dettra undertook a celebrated 15-city national tour of the complete organ works of César Franck in commemoration of the composer's bicentenary. Recent and upcoming performances include appearances in New York, Chicago, Boston, Washington, San Francisco, Atlanta, and Kansas City. Festival appearances include the Lincoln Center Festival, the Carmel Bach Festival, the Arizona Bach Festival, the Bermuda Festival of the Performing Arts, and the Piccolo Spoleto Festival. He has been a featured performer at national conventions of the American Guild of Organists, the Association of Anglican Musicians, the Organ Historical Society, and the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, and is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator for master classes, workshops, and competitions.

Mr. Dettra is featured on many recordings, including The Anglo-American Classic Organ, Majestus, and Tongues of Fire. Additional recordings may be found on the Gothic, Innova, Lyrichord, Pro Organo, and Linn labels. In addition to commercial recordings, his performances have been broadcast numerous times on such radio programs as American Public Media's Pipedreams and Performance Today, the BBC's Choral Evensong, and The New York Philharmonic This Week.

Mr. Dettra holds two degrees from Westminster Choir College, where he was a student of Joan Lippincott, and has studied organ and jazz piano at Manhattan School of Music.

Abilene Interfaith Council

Linda Goolsbee

"The less we know about other religions, the more differences we see. Knowledge shows how we are alike." A young woman at the Hindu Temple in Lubbock welcomed our Abilene Interfaith Council (AIC) bus tour group last spring with a greeting that sums up my dedication to AIC. Bringing programs from a variety of faiths and speakers to our community, working with the IRC and Dyess Chaplains, and partnering with local universities and museums over the years has enlarged this community's knowledge about our neighbors' different faith traditions. Somehow our own faiths are not weakened, but our experience of God is enlarged. We are good neighbors.



Abilene
INTERFAITH
Council



Heavenly Rest has been involved in the Abilene Interfaith Council since our late priest, the Reverend Roz Thomas, was one of the driving forces behind its creation. She had been meeting regularly for lunch with two friends, the Cantor of Temple Mizpah and the prison's Muslim Chaplain. They were inspired to form an organization that opened these lunches to people of all faiths to learn about each other. The motto they chose was "Breaking Bread Together in Peace." These monthly AIC potlucks were held in our Parish Hall for many years.

My first experience with AIC was attending one as a new member in 2004. We had just moved here from California, and the AIC programs reassured us that our new Parish would be open and loving. The National Day of Prayer service was especially uplifting as prayers from other faith traditions in our community were welcomed with equal respect and ended by breaking bread together in peace.

Angel Tree

Amanda Watson

In November we gather angels from the Angel Tree to provide Christmas gifts for children of incarcerated parents. These parents are unable to gather with their children at Christmas time. But we can anonymously provide the gifts of wonder and expectation of Christmas for those children. On November 16th the Angel Tree will go up in the Cloister (that room off the nave). Each angel on the tree represents a gift for a specific child. A gift with the maximum cost of \$30 is to be purchased for each angel and returned to the church unwrapped with the angel securely attached to the outside of the gift.

Each child will receive three gifts, so there will be three angels for each child. When removing an angel from the tree, please complete the form found on the cabinet with your name, your contact information and the name and code found on the angel and identifying the child. Then attend the Wednesday night Wrapping Party on December 10th at 6:30pm. Do not miss the Wrapping Party it is one of the best nights of the year!! I guarantee your heart will be glad!! This is a time that we gather together to give anonymously God's blessing to families separated by difficult circumstances.





“We gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing.”

Amanda Watson

According to the church calendar, we gather together on October 31st for the Service of All Hallows Eve, which precedes All Saints Sunday. But to the world October 31st is HALLOWEEN. Luckily, the Book of Common Prayer provides that “suitable festivities and entertainments may take place before or after this service, and a visit may be made to a cemetery or burial place”.

Those “suitable festivities” will be Halloween Trick or Trick at Heavenly Rest from 6:00pm until 8:00pm. From Decorated vehicles, cars, trucks, and, yes, even tents will be distributing candy to a menagerie of princesses, dinosaurs, superheroes and a vast array of all sorts of creatures. We will be providing water, access to bathrooms, parking, and a playground so that everyone will be able to stop, rest, relax, eat candy and simply gather together.

At 8:15pm, at the close of the evening night surrounded by the ringing of the bells we gather together in the columbarium for the service of All Hallows Eve saying the words of the Phos hilaron, “Now as we come to the setting of the sun and our eyes behold the vesper light, we sing your praises, O God...”
“We gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing.”



Please contact Mother Amanda if you can provide a trunk. We will need lots and lots of candy – please consider donating candy or small trinkets that can be handed out to our trick or treaters.

Between now and October 26th, bags candy may be placed in bins with the large Trick or Treat signs found at the entrances to the nave and Gerhart Hall.

Tamasha la wa Afrika

On Sunday, October 26 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., Heavenly Rest will host the fifth annual Tamasha la wa Afrika (“Celebration of Africa”), a festival of African music, culture, and cuisine. The theme of this year’s Tamasha is “Hata mwisho wa nchi” (“To the ends of the earth”).

This event will feature music from Heavenly Rest’s own “Alleluia Choir,” along with special guests from throughout the African community in Texas. The festival will also include traditional East African food, as well as cultural demonstrations from members of the Heavenly Rest congregation.

This year, we will welcome the Right Reverend Francis Omondi, bishop of the Diocese of Garissa in Kenya. Located along Kenya’s border with Somalia, Garisa is a missionary diocese, bearing witness to the power of Christ’s love in challenging circumstances. Bishop Francis will preach at our 10:30 service and offer remarks during Tamasha as well.

For more than a decade, Abilene has been home to a growing population of refugees and other newcomers from East Africa. Heavenly Rest has become a center of African culture in West Texas. Tamasha la wa Afrika is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about our afternoon congregation, celebrate their culture, and acknowledge their contribution to the parish and the wider Abilene community.

Thanksgiving Eve



At the heart of every Sunday service is a prayer of thanksgiving. The word “Eucharist,” in fact, comes from the Greek verb “to give thanks.” The life of our community, in other words, is centered around the act of giving thanks to God for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life. For this reason, it is hard to imagine a more appropriate way to celebrate Thanksgiving than by gathering for the Holy Eucharist. Before the feast, football, and fellowship, join us at Heavenly Rest for our Thanksgiving Eve service on Wednesday, November 26 at 5:30. We will sing hymns, pray, and above all, give thanks for all the blessings of this life.

Staff Announcements

We are pleased to announce the hiring of two new members of the office staff at Heavenly Rest: Lydia Hurt and Brenda Fisher. While they have both been in the office for several months, their positions were made permanent at the beginning of September.

Lydia will be serving as our Parish Manager. In this position, Lydia will work with other members of the Heavenly Rest staff to coordinate the resources of the parish to serve the congregation and members of the wider community. Lydia has been serving in a similar capacity on an interim basis for the last several months, and many members of the parish have been impressed with her warmth, approachability, and organizational skills.

Brenda has been hired to serve as our Parish Accountant. In this capacity, Brenda will facilitate the stewardship of parish resources by maintaining the books and providing information about the church's financial position. She will also work with Jen Rogers, our Director of Communications and Stewardship, to communicate with parishioners and other donors about their contributions to the parish. Since coming on board as our interim bookkeeper, Brenda has been both a team player and a consummate professional.

We are delighted to welcome both Lydia and Brenda to the team. If you haven't already, we hope you will drop by the office to welcome them!



Diocesan Convention 2025

In mid-October, clergy and delegates from all the parishes, missions, and communities in the Episcopal Diocese of Northwest Texas will gather in Lubbock for the 67th Annual Convention of the Diocese. We will hear from Bishop Mayer, conduct the business of the Diocese, and be reminded that the Church transcends our local communities. Please keep the Convention, especially the representatives from Heavenly Rest, in your prayers as we gather for this important meeting.

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel in the Episcopal Diocese of Northwest Texas for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Mark Your Calendars!

October 16-18th | Diocesan Convention (Lubbock)

October 19th | Ragtime in Abilene

October 26 | Tamasha la wa Afrika

October 29 | Dia de los Muertos Potluck at 6:00

October 31 | Trick or Treating at Heavenly Rest and
All Hallow's Eve Service

November 5, 12, 19 | Native American Heritage Month

November 16 | Consecration Sunday

November 26 | Thanksgiving Eve Service at 5:30

November 30 | First Sunday in Advent

December 3 | Neighborhood Caroling

December 10 | Angel Tree Wrapping Party

December 17 | Advent Quiet Night

Youth Events This Fall

High School Coffee Chats - High School Students - come hang out with us for a casual Youth Group meet-up at Grain Theory! We'll grab some coffee, catch up, and have some good conversation. Bring a friend, everyone's welcome! 10-11am on November 1, December 13.

Youth Hangs - Middle and High School Students - Once a month, we will gather for snacks, games, and fellowship. The location and time will vary each month. Can't wait to see you there! Nov 2 (Seven and One Bookstore), December 7 (Gensics').

Youth at Lyndale - Middle and High School Students - We will worship alongside other members of the Heavenly Rest community and the Lyndale Memory Care residents for their 2:00 pm service and then we will walk to Braum's for ice cream. The service is 20-30 minutes long with a short liturgy and songs. Braum's is .4 miles away so about a 7 minute walk. 2-3:30pm on November 23, December 21.



Follow us online!
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THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Most Reverend Sean Rowe, *Presiding Bishop*

THE DIOCESE OF NORTHWEST TEXAS

The Right Reverend J. Scott Mayer, *Bishop*

PARISH STAFF

The Reverend David Romanik, *Rector*

The Reverend Ashley Powers, *Associate Rector*

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

The Reverend Karen Boyd, *Assisting Priest*

The Reverend Doug Thomas, *Priest in Residence*

The Reverend Dr. Russell Dickerson, *Deacon*

The Reverend Joe Biles, *Deacon and Pastoral Assistant*

Bikole Mulanda, *Swahili Minister*

Thomas Pavlechko, *Organist and Director of Music*

Shelly Reed, *Music Assistant, Choristers*

Laura Dickson, *Music Assistant, Children's Choir*

Carol Ann Weston, *Director of Family Ministries*

Jen Rogers, *Director of Communications and Stewardship*

Lydia Hurt, *Parish Manager*

Brenda Fisher, *Parish Accountant*

Robert Becerra, *Sexton*

Dorothy Guerra, *Housekeeper*

Anne Jones, *Nursery Manager*

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All Saints 2025
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