

October 1, 2017

Dear Friends,

It is Fall, and I am writing to you from Philadelphia. I am here to celebrate Yom Kippur with Patti and her mother who has been a member of this synagogue for 75 years. These are the High Holy Days of the Jewish calendar, also called 'Days of Awe,' that span ten days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. It is a time for serious reflection on one's life over the previous year, a time to consider where we've missed the mark in our personal dealings with others but also in our social responsibilities to the larger community, the world, and the earth itself. Beginning the first day of the month of Elul, which usually occurs August-September, Jews are called to search their hearts and draw close to God in preparation for the Day of Judgment, Rosh Hashanah, and the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. All told these 40 days bring Lenten observances to mind, which isn't surprising since Christianity patterns many of its spiritual traditions on Jewish practices and rituals. People are invited to pray, to fast (on Yom Kippur), to do good deeds, to ask forgiveness from anyone they've harmed (to repent), and to forgive those who have harmed them. All of this occurs within the context of an awareness that God is listening, loving, forgiving and transforming the people, responding to their sincerity of heart and inviting the insincere to go deeper, to experience God's presence and invitation in their own lives. The soulful chant of the Avinu Malkeinu, translated "Our Father/Our King" (or "Loving Father/Compassionate Mother" according to a Reform version in The Jewish High Holy Day prayer book, the Mishkan HaNefesh, 2015) repeats over and over in my mind as I prepare to return home. The song is a moving petition asking God to "hear our prayer, have compassion on us and our children, help us bring an end to pestilence, war, and famine, cause all hate and oppression to vanish from the earth, inscribe us for blessing in the Book Of Life, and let the new year (which begins on Rosh Hashanah) be a good year for us." It is a prayer for us as individuals but also for the community as a whole and the world itself: may all of us be blessed and may this be a good year for everyone and all of creation. These Holy Days make way for a new beginning with a look to the past, a recognition that it is within community that we face ourselves and our failures, make amends, and receive the love and support we need to be our best selves going forward. And they set the stage for the ending and beginning of our own church year as we move through the next two months toward the Feast of Christ the King (last Sunday of November and end of the church year) and the First Sunday of Advent, December 3, which begins the church's 'new year'. So we too prepare for the 'penitential season' of Advent, a time in which we wait with hope as well as faith, that something new is coming into being—a new vision, a new and wondrous incarnation of Love itself—through us. The deep and humble work we are called to do is ongoing, and the Gospel of Matthew will bring that challenge home week after week as we make our way through fall.

Lectors: Sunday Mass Readings: If you are interested in accessing the readings for our weekend Masses they can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/> which is the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website. We use the Sunday readings for both Saturday and Sunday Masses. Though the Church designates the New American Bible (NAB) translation to be used at liturgies, Sophia Christi uses the translation created by Priests For Equality because of its commitment to inclusive

language. Lectors will find some differences between the two but are still encouraged to prepare using the USCCB site since variations are somewhat minimal.

Mass Schedule This Month

Mass in Eugene will be Sunday, **October 8**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23rd**, at **4:00pm**. A potluck follows our celebration. Please bring an entree, salad or veggie dish to share. If you are interested in being part of the choir as a musician or singer, please come at 3:00 for rehearsal.

Mass in Portland will be Saturday, **October 14**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way** at **5:00pm**. Please bring an entree, salad or veggie dish for our potluck meal. Choir rehearsal begins at 4:00 and all interested singers and musicians are invited to come and participate.

Upcoming Events:

Our 'Annual Meeting'—November 18—and Call for New Council Members

Our next Council meeting will be Saturday, November 18, at Ike Box Café in Salem from 11:00 to 1:00. **I invite you to pray and think about whether you are being called to serve on the Council.** Helping guide our communal journey into a new decade is an important ministry in itself and the Council needs people with vision and a variety of skills to discern Spirit's guidance and forge a path forward together. Please prayerfully consider this invitation and come to the next meeting if you can. If unable to come, please give your thoughts to Council members before the September weekend Masses on the 9th and 10th. For carpool information contact Toni in Portland or Judith in Eugene. Portland Council members: Kathy, Joy and Jim. Eugene Council members: Judith, Carol, Bruce, Dianne and Jessica.

Annual Retreat 2018 – Save the Date

Ash Wednesday is February 14 next year and we will begin the Lenten season with our annual Retreat from Friday evening through Saturday afternoon, February 16 and 17. We are excited to announce that Sr. Carmel has accepted our invitation to facilitate the 2018 retreat. For those who have experienced her creative energy and grounded presence leading retreats in the past this is especially meaningful. Her familiarity with, and deep understanding of, our community brings us full circle as we continue celebrating the completion of a full decade of ministry in Eugene and Portland. How have you grown spiritually in the last ten years? This will be a time of reflection and prayer at the outset of Lent to help us begin the journey toward Holy Week with open and receptive hearts. More details about location and costs will be provided as they are finalized, but please mark your calendar now so you are free to participate in February.

Pastoral Update:

Summary of September 16 Council Meeting

The Parish Council met September 16. The most exciting development was Jessica Katon (Dianne & Bruce Turner's daughter) wanting to join. She spoke of her interest in helping Sophia Christi to grow, and her experience as a Chief Financial Officer for a nonprofit. We were thrilled to vote her in as our newest Council Member! With the financial report, we reimbursed \$432 in out-of-pocket expenses for the 10th Anniversary celebrations, and confirmed that Carol will create a 2018 Proposed Budget for approval at our annual meeting in November. Ministry

Partners in both Eugene and Portland have not worked out as we'd hoped. After lengthy discussion, we decided to discontinue the program for now but continue collecting needed items for both organizations as they help the homeless in our two locations. We're planning our 2018 Lenten Retreat, and so far we know two things: (1) Our facilitator will be Sister Carmel, who has facilitated several retreats and gatherings with us; and (2) the date will be February 16-17. Jessica volunteered to research locations, in case we can find something even better than the Salem 4H Camp. As our continuing fiscal health depends on donations from parishioners, we'll speak of pledges at both Masses in October and November, and distribute new pledge cards. Our annual meeting will be at Ike Box, in Salem, on Saturday, November 17, from 11:00 to 1:00. Please join us if you're interested in getting the "big picture!" –Judith M., Council Secretary

From Our Treasurer

Much needed rain has come to Oregon. The fires that were so devastating to much of our beautiful state are becoming a thing of the past. Fall is in the air and 2017 is quickly coming to a close. In 2017, Sophia Christi has much to celebrate on the occasion of our 10 years as an inclusive Catholic community. Our small, dedicated group also has much to be proud of. Besides making Sophia Christi a caring, welcoming church where people are made to feel that God truly loves them. We are managing to cover our financial obligations because of the commitment that many of you have made by filling out the pledge cards last fall and following through with your pledges. As treasurer I am happy to report that at our present giving levels we will end the year in the black. Thank you all. If you have forgotten what your pledge was please call or email Toni, she will be happy to remind you. For those of you who choose not to pledge but to put what you can in the collection basket thank you as well. Perhaps some would say that talking about money is a turn off but for myself I feel so strongly about how important it is to spread the message that Sophia Christi brings to people who are in need of compassion and understanding, as well as spiritual support and encouragement, that I'm happy to talk about the financial commitment needed to make this happen. If we want to make a difference it will take not only love but also money. --Carol Z., Treasurer

Contemplative Prayer Group – Eugene

*The contemplative prayer group met, meditated silently for 20 minutes, then read and talked about Richard Rohr's *The Divine Dance: The Trinity and your Transformation*. We shared images, questions, and thoughts about how Rohr sees Jesus demonstrating God's grace toward people of all backgrounds—"something his disciples and the crowds did not expect." Other ideas that moved us were "emptiness alone is prepared for fullness," and we can experience our transforming selves in the spaces-between-things. To me, this brought to mind my experience of floating at the passageway to a cove in Puget Sound at high tide. Attuned there in the water, you feel the current moving in ... in ... into the cove. Then a stillness hovers for just a bit, suspends, waits, wonders. Then gently the water shifts, moves slightly, and carries itself out ... out ... out on its way to the sea, and you with it. –Dianne D.*

Ministry Partners:

At the Council meeting September 16, members who had been volunteering at Rose Haven in Portland and Catholic Worker House in Eugene provided information about their experiences as Ministry Partner representatives for Sophia Christi. As our on-site volunteers they helped evaluate the program we began three years ago to extend our social justice outreach. The experiment has been valuable for us in many ways, and has also served the organizations we've worked with. However, the hoped-for partnerships have not developed and would require more time and energy than our small community is able to muster at this time. After hearing the experiences of our volunteers and considering our options the Council decided to discontinue the 'Ministry Partner' program as such. We will, however, continue assisting each organization by collecting

items needed to serve the homeless population in each city, and we will pass along their requests for clothing, hygiene products and general supplies. Please look over the list of needed items and bring them with you to Mass each month. We will collect your donations and deliver them to the Catholic Worker House in Eugene and Rose Haven in Portland. The needs are even greater with cold weather approaching.

Rose Haven—Requests

Rose Haven is currently accepting fall clothing (new and like-new items only) and waterproof items. They are also very low on panties (new only), wipes, travel-sized toothpaste, deodorant, bras, and leggings. They also need light jackets, new socks, rain jackets, umbrellas and general supplies such as backpacks (with and without wheels), shopping bags with handles (grocery store bags are perfect), rolling suitcases and carts, sleeping bags, reading glasses and sewing kits. For an additional list of needed items simply go to <http://rosehaven.org/helping/donate-items/>

Eugene Catholic Worker--Requests

The list of needed items includes: warm clothes and socks (including mismatched socks), travel size hand sanitizer, soaps, shampoos and grooming items. Articles always welcome as well are backpacks, blankets and sheets. If you have any questions please speak with Kathy Pekarsky, Rhoda Kirwin or Dianne Turner.

Website

Remember that the newsletter, current homily, and Council minutes are posted on the website each month, as are all upcoming Sophia Christi events along with directions to those events. Our web address is www.sophiachristi.org

A pastoral reminder--if you or someone you know has a pastoral need that isn't being met, please don't hesitate to give me a call. You have my email address in this mailing, and my office phone number is 503-286-3584. Feel free to use either one. You can contact me anytime for conversation, home visitation, reconciliation or anointing, home Masses, weddings, funerals, memorial services or other pastoral care needs.

Mary McGlone, who writes the Commentary for Celebration magazine says: "The parables and stories Matthew will tell us from now through November are all situated in the last week of Jesus' life, a detail that tells us to listen to them with a particular urgency." And so we do. Jesus is facing his last days with the disciples as we face the last days of the year. Next Sunday Jesus warns against ignoring those sent to call us to task, while the following Saturday he warns against the kind of busy-ness, or obstinacy, that may prevent us from heeding his summons to the table set for everyone. We are asked to internalize these messages and notice what stands in the way of hearing them at a deeply personal level. Paul advises the Philippians to "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God." So we ask to hear, to see, to have the courage to be transformed, so "the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard [our] hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Sophia's wisdom be yours this fall,

Toni