

The Light

A monthly newsletter for

St. Augustine's in-the-Woods The Episcopal Church serving Whidbey Island.



Rev. Nigel Taber-Hamilton, Rector
Rev. William Burnett, Rector Emeritus
Rev. William Seth Adams, Priest Associate
Rev. M. Fletcher Davis, Priest Associate
Rev. Amy Donohue-Adams, Priest Associate
Rev. Julie Bird, Deacon
Rev. Tom Johnson, Clergy Associate

St. Augustine's Weekly Services

SUNDAY

8:00 am Eucharist Rite I
followed by coffee and Adult Forums

10:30 am Eucharist Rite II
with music, church school & child care
followed by coffee hour

MONDAY

5:30 pm Solemn Evensong
(with incense)

TUESDAY

7:00pm Quiet Time Meditation

WEDNESDAY

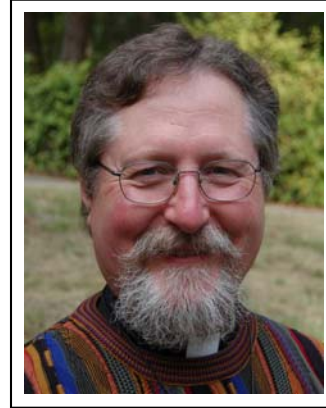
10:00 am Eucharist and Holy Unction

MARCH 2012

- 1 = Lenten Programs begin
- 2 = Sarah Parker's Birthday
Cleveland Riley & Jan Mulder's Anniversary
- 3 = Gail Corell's Birthday
Trinity Everett Retreat at St. A's
- 6 = Tom Clendenin's Birthday
- 7 = Erin & Mark Borden's Anniversary
Amy & Mike Picco's Anniversary
ECW Meeting in Campbell Hall
- 8 = Megan Parker's Birthday
- 9 = Gary Johnson's Birthday
- 10 = Peggy Manchester's Birthday
Mic Kissinger's Birthday
- 14 = Judy Yeakel's Birthday
- 15 = Rachel Taber-Hamilton's Birthday
Dwight Schultz's Birthday
- 16 = Bert Speir's Birthday
- 17 = Kathryn Rickert's Birthday
Anniversary of the Ordinations of...
The Rev. Nigel Taber-Hamilton
The Rev. Amy Donohue-Adams
- 18 = Greening Committee Meeting
- 19 = Andt Pringle's Birthday
- 20 = Diane Lantz's Birthday
William Corell's Birthday
Joann Norman's Birthday
- 21 = Mary Chapman's Birthday
Bill Skubi's Birthday
- 22 = Sue Idso's Birthday
- 24 = David Close's Birthday
Grethe Cammermeyer's Birthday
- 26 = Tom & Michelle Johnson's Anniversary
- 27 = Laura Tochney's Birthday
Dallas Viall's Birthday
- 28 = ECW Board Meeting



From the Rector



The cheese of the day is.....

As many of you know, Toby is a dog with a purpose – he will be a therapy dog. This means that he will be trained so that he can visit folk – at home, in nursing homes and hospitals, at church; in fact, in any situation where he will be a welcome and calming presence.

In the last ten days I've embarked on the training necessary for him to do this. It involves cheese! Cheese is the incentive for him to pay attention, and to learn and then follow a series of commands. As Rachel's late father – a trained behavioral psychologist of the "Skinner School" – would say: this is classic behavioral modification.

Cheese is a mechanism that changes behavior for the good, a change that doesn't just benefit the individual dog but the whole community who knows and interacts with him.

Christian practice – and especially Lenten practice – is a little like that. We're invited to engage in behaviors that will, if practiced with intention and frequency, change the way we live our lives – and that change benefits not just the local community but the world in general.

The incentive, however, is not that on Easter Day we'll all receive blocks of Brie cheese, though food is, in a way involved, at least metaphorically! The food" in question is fruit!

That, anyway, is how St. Paul characterizes the results of such a way of living when writing to the Galatian community: the "fruit of the Spirit". "The fruit of the spirit is" he says, "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...." (Galatians: 5:22). These are the grace-filled consequences of a life lived in a certain way, and they certainly represent incentives for all of us. Who, after all, would want to turn down love? Or joy? Or peace?

The invitation to a "Holy Lent" is in the Book of Common Prayer and is a part of the Ash Wednesday service. The practices we're invited to engage in are listed there: "self-examination and repentance; ...prayer, fasting, and self-denial...reading and meditating on God's holy Word." (BCP p. 265). All of these practices are designed specifically to put us in a place where we not only become open to the meaning of the events of Holy Week and Easter, *but also* create in us a willingness to allow that meaning to change us, and to change our lives, for the better.

May your Lenten journey be filled with experiences of Christian practice, and may you come freshly born to the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection this Eastertide.
Grace and peace to you,

Nigel

Christian Formation at St. Augustine's

by Shantina Steele

I have begun to plan this summer's Vacation Bible School. Last year, Annie Deacon, began to create an outline for an environmentally centered Vacation Bible School using Godly Play stories, local presenters on our environment and wildlife, and activities from the book "Earth Child" by Kathryn Sheehan and Mary Waidner, Phd. I would like to share with you an excerpt from the introduction to this book because it wonderfully expresses our desires as a Greening Congregation and the importance of our adult modeling of environmental stewardship to the younger generations.



Keeping the Wonder Alive

Many educators believe that a small child possesses inherent attitudes of care and compassion for fellow creatures, both human and non-human. But the quality of our children's environmental awareness and their sense of wonder in the natural world must be supported, channeled, and encouraged in order for them to fully develop a respect for the beauty and complexity of their planetary home.

The development of environmental awareness in young children is definitely a joint project. As Rachel Carson has pointed out, shared experiences with trusted adults are essential in fostering a deep and lasting compassion for the Earth and its creatures in children. Children in preschool and early elementary-school years are indelibly marked by the attitudes of the grownups in their lives. If their parents, other family members, and teachers surround them with an evident attitude of compassion and concern for the planet we all share they will grow up with a deep-rooted connectedness with the natural world.

This guide [and our VBS] is designed to help adults and children share the wonder that a deep awareness of their environment can bring. Through activities, musings, [Godly Play stories, and adult guides], chosen especially for their unique way of looking at our world, adults and children can share stories and activities that softly and subtly make the point that the planet is in our hands and that it is up to us to take care of it. There isn't much a preschooler can do about global warming, pollutants in our waters, or the chopping down of the world's rainforests. But even very young children can be aware of the freshness of the air on a spring day, the sight and sound of a mountain stream, the majesty of a great tree. And this is where it all begins: with awareness, with love of the Earth – which, when ingrained in our children, will grow with them in adulthood. This guide [and our VBS] acknowledges that we are part of the ecological systems of the Earth and that the world and its resources are not a horn of plenty whose riches we may consume, but a finite vessel harboring delicate resources that must be protected and conserved. A belief in the interconnectedness of all things informs the holistic approach reflected in the choice of books, activities, and suggestions presented here [and in our VBS this summer].

We parents, teachers, friends and relatives of young children can learn so much from listening. Children know, for example, that all the animals within the natural world, human and non-human, are part of a big extended family. They have heard it in their stories and felt it in their hearts. So those of us who have the humility of a child, who see through the eyes of a child, may find again a reverence and respect for our planet and a kinship with all living things.

If you are interested in being a part of our Vacation Bible School this summer, whether you have ideas for activities, want to be a guide or just want to be a part of the fun please let me know!! We'd love to have you join us on our journey! You can let me know by sending an email to formation@whidbey.com or calling me at 360-720-1785.

“If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder...he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.” –Rachel Carson *The Sense of Wonder*

Upcoming Christian Formation Events:

March 2012

1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th @ 6:00-8:30pm – Lenten Program w/Light Supper: *Bible Study on the Lenten Epistle Texts and Their Contexts* Led by Rev. Tom Johnson: Tom will lead us in study and discussion of the Epistle Lessons and their New Testament contexts for the first five Sundays in Lent.

4th, 11th, 18th, 25th @ 9:15-10:00am – Adult Forum

18th @ 9:45-10:15am – Acolyte & Worship Leader Rehearsal: David McClellan and Richard Tussey invite current Acolytes and Worship Leaders as well as those interested in learning more about this ministry to rehearse how we serve the clergy during the liturgy.

24th @ 5:00-7:00pm –Family Fun Night



Beware The “Granny Scam!”

submitted by Nancy Paris

Just a word of caution to my fellow parishioners.

I recently had my first experience with the well known “Granny Scam” and thought it was important to warn anyone who may not know about this money grabbing ploy so they could be alerted.

One day when I answered my phone a raspy voice said, “Grandma?” Then went on to say, “I’m sorry my voice is so bad but I’ve had the flu and a bad cold.” And then he said, “I’m sorry to tell you but I’ve had a little bad luck...” at that, “I know all about your bad luck!” and I hung up.

I knew from the start that this was a phony call of some kind because I’m not called Grandma by any of my grandchildren or in-laws. I knew the callers next words would be that he needed money quickly and he would ask me to wire it to him.

I called the sheriff’s office after I hung up just so they could add the call to their stats. The Deputy said these calls were becoming very common and that some people had lost \$2,000 or more by responding to what they thought was a grandchild in need.

The best thing to do is hang up immediately, but if you have any doubts about the call, ask questions only your grandchild would know and follow up with a call to their parents. Do not wire money!



BEWARE



Adult Forum Schedule - March

Given the funky and sometimes beautiful weather we experienced in February it's anybody's guess as to whether March will come in like a Lion or a Lamb. However, one thing you can take to the bank this month is an array of interesting and informative adult forums to brighten your Sunday mornings. We will continue our Bible study series on the Old Testament, featuring the saga of Jacob. Wendy Close, our favorite Parish Nurse, will bring in a special guest speaker to talk about nutrition, and we will have another one of our patented Town Hall meetings led by Harry Anderson, our stellar Senior Warden.



Specific forum dates, subject matter, and presenters/hosts are listed below:

4 March- The Jacob Saga. This lecture continues to focus on literary analysis by introducing the older method of form criticism, then showing its development. The test case is Genesis 25, the initial relationship of Jacob and Esau. This literary analysis features attention to metaphors, double entendres, narrative voice, physical description, explicit motives or lack thereof, and dialogue. We end with remarks about political and aesthetic implications derived from these reading strategies. Ted Brookes will host.

11 March- Nutrition in a Nutshell. Wendy Close will present the first health-wise lecture of the new year. Her guest speaker for this session is Erin Simms, who is a registered dietician at Whidbey General Hospital. Erin's talk is titled "Get your Plate In Shape." It will highlight the new government recommendations for healthy eating and the now defunct, yet iconic Food Pyramid. Wendy Close will host.

18 March- Parish Town Hall Meeting. This will be our first quarter Town Hall meeting for Church Year 2012. These gatherings give the congregation a sterling opportunity to hear current information on various church issues, such as the Building Fund status and the general financial situation. It also provides a unique forum in which to ask questions and make appropriate comments. Harry Anderson will host.

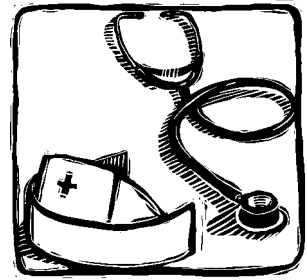
25 March- Folklore Analysis & Type Scenes. Earlier approaches to the Bible, such as source and form criticism, find application in the study of conventional plot lines or "type scenes." Rather than regard such repetition as indicating a retelling of a single episode by different sources, type-scene analysis shows how changes in the convention disclose narrative art, as well as convey information about community heroes and values. Because type-scene analysis owes much to the study of folklore we begin with folkloric conventions. Our test case is the continuation of the Jacob saga. We then turn to type-scene analysis by examining various encounters of men and women at wells. This lecture also includes a brief foray into the Gospel of John, where another version of the type scene appears. Ted Brookes will host.



From the Parish Nurse

by Wendy Close

Blood Pressure Sunday will be March 4 directly following each service. Come to the Fireside Room to have it checked then. Of course if you are at all concerned and want me or one of my trusty aides (Christina Parker, Dr. Amy Picco, and Bev Babson) to check it at some other time please grab us and we would be happy to do so.



The following Sunday, March 11, Erin Simms will be presenting the adult forum. She is a nutritionist at Whidbey General Hospital and will be presenting the new government guidelines (suggestions) for serving up a healthy diet. Come join us in Campbell Hall. She has great visuals that bring her message home in a fun way.



On Stewardship and Worship

Submitted by Elaine Ludtke

“Worship is giving God the best that He has given you. Be careful what you do with the best you have. Whenever you get a blessing from God, give it back to Him as a love gift. Take time to meditate before God and offer the blessing back to Him in a deliberate act of worship. If you hoard a thing for yourself, it will turn into spiritual dry rot, as the manna did when it was hoarded. God will never let you hold a spiritual thing for yourself; it has to be given back to Him that He may make it a blessing to others.”

This quote is from Oswald Chambers, a Scots protestant minister who died in 1917. It says everything that needs to be said about how we should live and steward the many gifts God has given us. Recently I read this short quote while doing some research about Stewardship. It really resonated with me. It speaks clearly and simply about how worship and stewardship are interconnected. I hope you find it so.



Marching into pancake dinner on Shrove Tuesday.

Mission Sunday Offering for March

The March MSO recipient is All Souls in the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans

All Souls Episcopal mission, has a special connection with St. Augustine's. This connection was established during a Diocesan work mission to New Orleans organized by Diana Kline. Eight St. Augustine parishioners and three others with family connections to St. Augustine's took part in the March 2009 work mission. Since 2009 four St. Augustine's parishioners have visited All Souls on two other occasions related to work mission activity in New Orleans

The work mission began with a celebration of Eucharist at All Souls Episcopal mission. The worship at All Souls was an uplifting spiritual event - a major of the highlight of the NOLA work mission.

All Souls, with a predominately African American congregation, was established in 2006 as an outgrowth of post-Katrina assistance to people in the Lower Ninth. The congregation initially met in an auto repair garage. The congregation now occupies an abandoned Walgreen's drug-store and is affectionately referred to as "St. Walgreens."

In 2009 All Souls carried the Gospel to their community through a wide range of social outreach which includes a computer lab and tutoring for middle and high school students, repairing nine houses, holding a community Saturday market, and providing classical musical training. The official name of the mission, All Souls Episcopal Church and Community Center, reflects their commitment to community outreach.



These programs continue. The tutoring program is offered four nights a week. Two sessions of two hours in length are offered each night for students pre-K through 8th grade. The sessions averages 40 students.



The music instruction has expanded to include the development of a Youth Orchestra of the Lower Ninth Ward. Twenty-five youth are enrolled, the program maximum, and there is a waiting list. The orchestra program has assistance form Trinity Wall Street Episcopal (New York City) and the University of New Orleans.

The Rev. Lonell Wright describes the home repair mission as, "Rebuild / Restore - We assist families to rebuild their homes by providing volunteers and expertise including architectural services. We also, sometimes, provide drywall and other donated building supplies to help rebuild their homes and lives."

The worship and education experience obtained through the All Souls visitation was a transforming experience. We would like to maintain this special relation with All Souls. MSO is one way in which St. Augustine's can help the vital outreach of All Souls while being enriched by a relationship with All Souls.

Whidbey Japan Benefit an Interfaith Happening

Rumi Keast of Whidbey Japan Benefit was an integral part of the Whidbey Interfaith Vigil of Peace and Hope held October 31 at St. Augustine's. She also helped with this year's Whidbey "Blessed Are the Peacemakers," Martin Luther King, Jr celebration. Rumi placed Ora Houston's homily on YouTube for the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. The Episcopal Peace Fellowship invites parishioners to attend the Whidbey Japan Benefit. Rumi is the primary organizer of the "We Are One" concert. Christina Parker and Emily Anderson will also be performing at the concert, providing a St. Augustine's connection.

Whidbey Japan Benefit friends present A Memorial service and "We Are One" concert



Join us in remembering more than
20,000 earthquake victims,
sending warm thoughts to the survivors,
and encouraging a spirit of "peace."

Saturday, 2pm, March 24th
Trinity Lutheran Church
18241 HWY 525, Freeland

Free admission. Donations are appreciated.



About the event:

The first half is a reverent memorial service with requiems, healing music and prayers offered by Christian and Buddhist (Tahoma One Drop Zen Monastery) priests. The memorial is also a remembrance for victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean and 2010 Haiti earthquakes. The 2nd half is a concert with four singing groups and a sing along with the audience, celebrating diversity and togetherness.

Musicians:

Open Circle singers
Shifty Sailors

Sound Singers (Lynnwood based Japanese choir)
Trinity Lutheran Church Choir and ICTHUS youth ensemble

Karl Olsen, Linda Good, Beverly Heising, Elizabeth Lovelace, Talia Toni Marcus,
and other local musicians,
including Christina Parker and Emily Anderson from St. Augustine's.

Donation destination:

Japan Lutheran Emergency Relief

This organization primarily offers professional mental care for 1000 families in Ishinomaki's temporary housing area. These families come from one of the most severely affected areas, where 80 children were killed by the Tsunami.

About Japan Benefit Friends:

We are people on Whidbey Island and the mainland who support survivors' recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake that hit on March 11, 2011. We sent nearly \$13,000 to Japan, raised through three events last year.

Website:

<http://whidbeyjapanbenefit.wordpress.com/about/>

Contact:

whidbeyjapanbenefit@gmail.com
360-341-1817

Mission Sunday Offering



Introduction to the Mission Sunday Offering Submitted by Ron St. George

We have been blessed with many new faces and friends at St. Augustine's and I'd like to introduce many of you to one of our most popular and important outreach programs. Many years ago the parishioners of St. Augustine's created the Mission Sunday Offering. You might also just hear it called "MSO".

There are many adjectives and nouns that can be used to describe the Mission Sunday Offering. One that I feel describes it best is "effective". You may feel it's "an outreach". A person who needs our help may say "it's a godsend."

Every month St. Augustine's designates one charity for a separate and distinct collection. The 2012 MSO calendar can be found at the end of this article. All monies collected are routed to the assigned charity. For example, the February 2012 MSO recipient was "Good Cheer."

Your donations to these charities are matched by up to \$500 from the Parish Endowment Fund. Only have \$5 to donate? Turn it into \$10 simply by making that \$5 donation. No donation is too small. You may think your gift is small, but the folks receiving the help won't.

If you are new to St. Augustine's, I encourage you to find out what the MSO is doing and has done in the past. Your input on future MSO recipients will be instrumental and without your support, none of our mutual goals of charity, empathy and sharing could ever be accomplished.

Next time you're at church, take a look at the pew in front of you. You should find an envelope with a "MSO" sticker on it. Feel free to put pocket change, stray \$1 bills or checks in the envelope. If you'd like to have your donation recorded for tax purposes, please don't be shy to give. Write your name on the MSO envelope or just write "MSO" in the subject line of your personal check.

Thank you for your continued support and thank you for your future support of the M.S.O.

2012 MSO Recipients

Friends of Friends

+++++

Good Cheer

+++++

All Souls Episcopal Mission New Orleans, Louisiana

+++++

Helping Hand

+++++

Time Together

+++++

Episcopal Relief & Development

Citizens Against Domestic Abuse

+++++

Enso House

+++++

Meals on Wheels

+++++

Hearts & Hammers

+++++

Episcopal Charities Appeal

+++++

Ryan's House for Youth

Mary's Place

Empowering Homeless Women and Children to Reclaim Their Lives

Mary's Place Has a New Sister: Julia's Place

The problem that Mary's Place deals with everyday all year long is where to give families a place to sleep and safety from the streets at night. Since August of last year, sixteen wonderful congregational partners have helped shelter 20 families with 41 children--ensuring these families would not have to sleep outside.

Each congregation hosts the families at their facility for one week a quarter. Volunteers serve meals, coordinate transportation, play games, do laundry, and open their hearts to the women and children who seek shelter and safety there.

When Pastor Zimmerly of Madrona Grace Presbyterian heard about the rotating shelter he took the need to his congregation, they wanted to go one step further. The church had an unused basement space and the idea of a family shelter spoke to the heart of the congregation! The space has been renovated to become a year-round shelter that will host fourteen individuals. Volunteers will provide transportation, meals and a safe warm place for a family to be together. The shelter is named JULIE'S PLACE, a tribute to a member of their congregation.

"Thank you" to all the members of our church family that support Mary's Place through out the year with your donations. Especially at Christmas: the toys that a Mom can wrap and give her children, gifts the children can wrap and give to their Moms, shoe vouchers, hats, gloves, scarves, socks and the gifts of sundries were all greatly appreciated.

If you wish to give other special gifts...a new listing of the **Wish List** is in an envelope in front of the basket in the narthex.

If you have any questions about Mary's Place please talk to me or call.
Gretchen Wood (360-678-0656)



Trash and Treasure Sale

It's back! The Trash & Treasure sale will be held on **Saturday, April 21, from 9-3 p.m. in Campbell Hall.**

Please save the date and plan to help.

Items in GOOD condition that can be sold at the sale include antiques, jewelry, designer clothing, rugs, art, toys, linens, books, bakery goods, tools, plants, holiday items, and house wares.

Clean your cupboards now and bring the items during the week of April 16 so that we can price them and put them on display.

Thinking Now About Christmas..... Yikes!

Submitted by Jodi Heiken

Yes, it's only March and the Christmas Bazaar seems far, far away, but we're planning an early start this year.

Instead of waiting until the last several months, which crowds both Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, we're suggesting everyone get her or his creative juices flowing now!

Over the next few months there will be workshops highlighting various types of crafts, and we'll begin with knitting and crocheting next week.



On Wednesday, March 14th at 11:00 am in the Fireside Room, you'll have a chance to gather new ideas, share your own successful patterns, look at examples of easy, fun projects, and drool over (and take home) lovely donated yarn and yarn kits.

Don't know how or knit or crochet?

WE CAN TEACH YOU!!!



We have a number of people who are very experienced and can teach you the basics you'll need to start simple projects. Scarves, baby booties, hats, shawls, men's clothing, leg warmers, socks.....you name it, you can learn to do it!

It's fun, companionable, and a great way to extend your ministry at St. Augustine's. Just bring your willing fingers and join us on the 14th!



Spring ECW Easter Basket Raffle

The Episcopal Church Women are selling raffle tickets for a spring/Easter basket. The basket comes with a beautiful spring table runner handcrafted by Nancy Langler as well as her own handmade Easter bunny. Food fills out the basket. Be sure to buy a ticket.



From the Greening Committee submitted by Brian Reid

A Lenten Fast from Carbon

During Lent this year, **Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light** in partnership with the **Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment** invites us all to try a "fast from carbon." This fast will help reduce the amount of carbon dioxide we put into the atmosphere and better reflect our care of God's great gift of creation.

Why should we consider such a fast? For these reasons:

1. The CO₂ we put into the environment as greenhouse gasses is changing the climate of God's creation, our Earth.
2. We are the largest source of greenhouse gasses through our personal and societal uses.
3. Burning fossil fuels during the generation of electricity and from modes of transportation we use produce carbon dioxide, the largest component of greenhouse gas.
4. If we don't reduce our CO₂ emissions it will devastate our planet and its people, especially the poor and vulnerable, humans, animals and plants. Time is critical.
5. God created this Earth, declared it to be good, and expects us to care for creation, to maintain its goodness for future generations.

The Greening Committee will present seven spiritual reflections (each of the six Sundays of Lent) which will be posted on our bulletin board by Campbell Hall. This will include weekly actions to help individuals reduce their carbon footprint, information on global warming in Washington State, a statement by the faith community, a scripture reading followed by a prayer, and discussion questions for individuals and/or small groups.



Keystone XL Pipeline and Alberta Tar Sands:

Game over for the Climate?

As members of the Body of Christ, we acknowledge and embrace the divine call for us to be stewards of God's creation. It is our sacred responsibility to respect, preserve and protect all living things on this fragile Earth, our island home.

(St. Augustine's Greening Committee Mission Statement)

The following article, intended to engender thought and discussion, was written with the approval of the St. Augustine's Greening Committee.

The extraction of oil from the Alberta tar sands in Canada and the proposed Keystone XL pipeline to transport the tar sands crude oil 1700 miles to Texas refineries has opened a debate pitting defenders of the earth against powerful economic interests. A classic debate between long term concerns for our planet and the life that inhabits it and short term economic gain.

The extraction of oil from the Alberta tar sands resulted in the clear cutting of Canadian boreal forests prior to the open pit mining of the tar sands. To produce one barrel of oil, 8,800 pounds of earth must be excavated and 155 gallons of water used in the extraction process. This process requires heavy equipment burning fossil fuels with the resulting carbon emissions adding to the planet's greenhouse effect. The United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the carbon emissions necessary to produce refined oil from the tar sands are "82% greater than the average crude refined in the United States on a well to tank basis." The burning of this vast pool of petroleum extracted from the tar sands could increase the atmosphere's cur-

rent climate changing level of 390 parts per million to nearly 600. Beyond 350 parts per million is considered climate threatening. In the assessment of NASA scientist Jim Hansen it is “essentially game over for the climate” if the tar sands oil is burned. Additionally, there is a legal cost to the extraction of tar sands oil.

In the process of mining the tar sands the treaty rights of First Nations people were revoked. Once extracted the tar sands crude creates still another legal and environmental challenge. The crude oil must be transported by pipeline to either refineries or oil tankers. The first option of TransCanada, the corporation controlling the tar sands oil, was a pipeline to Vancouver where it would be shipped to Asian refineries. First Nation treaties upheld by the Canadian courts prevented this option. The second option is the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. This route would place pipes carrying crude oil above the largest aquifer in the United States. The Ogallala aquifer is a vast underwater lake left from the ice age. The aquifer is already endangered as more water is pumped to grow corn and soybeans than is being replenished by nature. Pipes carrying crude oil present the likelihood of a spill or leak that could contaminate irreplaceable water needed for drinking or agriculture. TransCanada’s record is not encouraging. Last year the company was responsible for 12 oil spills. Is the Keystone XL pipeline a risk worth taking?

Economically the pipeline will mean huge profits for the multi national oil companies that refine and distribute petroleum products. The pipelines will benefit those who work in the refineries and those who own stock in the oil companies. However, most of the profits will go to the Canadian TransCanada corporation. The pipeline will result in temporary jobs associated with the laying of the pipeline. The United States State Department estimates that 5,000 to 6,000 temporary jobs will be created. A Cornell University study projects only 4,650 temporary jobs. In contrast, TransCanada claims 20,000 jobs will be created. Supporters of the pipeline claim that it will reduce U.S. dependence on oil from outside North America. However, there is no guarantee that just because the oil is refined in Texas it will not be shipped to Asian or European markets.

Opposition to the pipeline comes from religious leaders, midwest ranchers and farmers and climate scientists. 651,530 individuals signed an online petition urging President Obama to reject the Keystone permit. He heeded their advice and rejected the pipeline proposal. The pipeline proposal must have Presidential approval as being in the “national interest.” The matter is settled for this year, but a new application is promised by TransCanada. The debate over the Keystone XL pipeline is certain to continue.

As Christians we are reminded from Genesis that God created the earth and proclaimed it and all its life to be good. The name Adam translates as earthling. We are from the earth and exist in relation to the earth, our island home. The psalmist declared, “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it.” (Psalm 24:1) Jesus used references to birds and lilies of the field in his parables. Jesus also spoke for the marginalized - “the least of my family.” As Episcopalians we are mandated by our Baptismal vows “to respect the dignity of all human beings.” It is those who have the fewest resources and lack political power who will suffer the most from the severe weather released by climate change, floods and droughts, rising sea waters and wars fought over decreasing energy resources.

Our Episcopal tradition calls upon us to pray, study and act.

Sources: Bill McKibben, “The Keystone XL Pipeline: Game Over for the Climate,” Sojourners, July 1, 2011, McKibben, *The Roots of the Tar Sands Movement*, Sojourners, December, 2011. Jack Palmer, *Keystone XL Pipeline: Debunking Some Myths*, Sojourners, January 18, 2012.