

Dear Ones,

In this week's vestry meeting, I could see the moment when it occurred to everyone that we had one more meeting before my sabbatical starts, which means less than four weeks to finish preparing. Good questions were raised—most of which were already on my checklist, but there were some others I hadn't thought of.

I am confident that you are all going to be just fine. You have very good leaders with a wide variety of experience. Whatever arises, someone will have dealt with it before and will know what to do. Part of my work over the next few weeks is to prepare myself for being away for three months. It's kind of terrifying, if I'm honest with you!

In the summer of 2021, when we were getting back to normal after COVID, I was preparing to take a full three weeks of vacation, and I was fretting about being away that long. Jeff Stuhr, who was a warden at the time, wrote something for me to read every time I began to worry. I did, and it worked. It began, "Dear Nancy's Brain..." The other day he texted and asked how my brain was doing, preparing for an even longer absence from you all. I laughed, remembering—and then went and found the message, so that I can begin reviewing it again, every time I wake up at 4:00 AM and can't get back to sleep.

In the meantime....*keep the faith*,
Nancy+

THIS SUNDAY'S READINGS

Genesis 29:15-28 * Psalm 105:1-11, 45b * Romans 8:26-39 * Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

Jeff Stuhr 7/27

CREATION CARE TIPS

Surely the Presence of the Lord is in This Place

Do you have a place that when you stop to take a breath and look around, you feel the presence of God? I have had many places like that, and almost all of them are outdoors.

A few days ago I sat down to eat lunch on our deck before heading out for the afternoon. It was one of those rare times that I was the only person at the table, and instead of an old standard memorized grace, I looked around, and this thought came to me, "Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place." I could feel the warmth of the day, and a slight breeze. I heard a distant lawn mower and traffic, ravens, and the occasional hum of our thirsty visiting hummingbirds. I gazed first at our slowly growing garden and then across the valley to the hills in front of Streaked Mountain, smiling when I saw Brett Hill, named after (or by) one of my ancestors. Life is good. I was not lonely, and I did not feel alone. The presence of the Lord was in that place.

Restored in body and soul, I went about the work and relaxation of the day, hearing over and over in my head the hymn that puts music to the words of Psalm 139. Surely the presence of the Lord is everywhere.

And suddenly, like a bolt out of the blue, a thought came to me...the second verse of Immortal, Invisible (hymn 423) begins, "Unresting, unchanging and silent as light!" Hah! Yes, electric lights are silent. But what about lightning? That's far from silent! Lightning never occurs without thunder. If you see the flash but don't hear the

boom or roll of thunder, it's more than ten miles away. It's like a concert in a stadium. The lights can be seen many more miles away than the music can be heard. Can you tell that I love thunderstorms?

So, where are the outdoor places you feel closest to God? A favorite waterfall, a garden filled with blooms and pollinators, your favorite constellation in a dark night sky, the place you met your one true love, in the midst of swirling snow, or when a rainbow appears? Perhaps we should each pause, appreciate that moment, that place, and the beauty God has created, and vow to protect this fragile Earth, our island home.

– Patty Watts, Christ Church Earth Keeper

Hurt not the earth—neither the sea—nor the trees. Revelation 7:3

CALENDAR

SUN: 10:15 AM Eucharist/In-person and online
WED: 9:00 AM Eucharist/Bible Study
THU: 7:15 PM Zoom Compline

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A/C in church is not functioning. Vestry is weighing the option of repairing the existing unit vs. installing a heat pump, which will also help with fuel costs in the winter.

United Thank Offering I'm going to guess that, if asked, a lot of us could list some things we DON'T like about summer, e.g., temps in the 90s, ticks, deer eating our plants. However, I bet we would all have longer lists of what we love and are grateful for in summer. My list includes Maine's hundreds of lakes, including a large one right in Norway, summer fruits, cookouts, July 4th celebrations, etc. Take a few moments to remind yourself of what you love about summer—then drop a quarter or dollar bill in your UTO box for each one. *Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Psalm 107:1*

Youth program in Bethel Speak to Rosemary for more info about the program for kids at the Bethel Historical Society, Thursday mornings.

Summer Coffee Hour Please feel free to move coffee hour outside if the weather allows.

The Committee on Indian Relations for the Diocese of Maine is seeking new members. Interested? Be in touch with the chair, The Rev. Annette Joseph, revarjoseph@gmail.com.

Sunday School is on hiatus for the summer.

For ongoing and up-to-date information about diocesan activities and news, as well as news from other congregations, sign up for **the DioLog**. <https://episcopalmaine.org/newsletter/>

MINISTRIES LIST

	This week:	Next week:
Lector 1:	Fran Martin	Patty Watts
Psalmist:	Peter Hammond	Peter Hammond
Lector 2:	Patty Watts	Rosemary Laban
Acolyte:	Patty Watts	Doug Wall
Euch. Minister:	Michelle Christoph	Michelle Christoph
Usher:	Janet Harvey	Tom Knight
Altar Guild:	Jan & Doug Wall	Jan & Doug Wall
Coffee Hour:	Jan & Doug Wall	Janet Harvey
Counter:	David Mering	Marg Means
Closer:	Peter Hammond	David Mering