

Happy New Year

Sacred Space

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Sacred Wide-Open, Unstructured, and Often Chaotic Space



I recently read a blog that posed the question about whether or not our liturgy can act as an excuse to not share our personal faith with others. A valid question, I think; we Episcopalians love our liturgy. We invite others to come into our worship space, knowing that the structure, the music, the rhythm and ritual carry us along from start to finish. The prayer book offers well-intoned words, written with style and skill so that often, it speaks for us. Other than the invitation to pray our intentions, we hardly have to form our own

words of offering to God or to others in public worship. Often, and I speak for myself, I move from the Opening Acclamation to the Dismissal to Small Talk at Coffee Hour, getting in my car to drive home without ever being challenged to articulate in my own words my personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

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Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Where there is Charity and
Wisdom,
there is neither fear nor
ignorance.

Where there is patience and
humility,
there is neither anger nor
disturbance.

Where there is poverty with joy,
there is neither greed nor
avarice.

Where there is rest and meditation,
there is neither anxiety nor
restlessness.

Where there is fear of the Lord to
guard an entrance,
there the enemy cannot have a
place to enter.

Where there is a heart full of mercy
and discernment,

The first time I served the Sacred Space Hayward congregation, I admit I was jolted by the lack of structure and ritual. There is a standard liturgy that is used, but it is not the one I've come to memorize out of the prayer book. There is the liturgy of the word and then the liturgy of the table, but what happens in those two liturgical blocks has only echoes of what happens in my own parish on Sunday mornings. As I stepped back and observed, I saw a whole new way of praising God that has been veiled in my own habitual movement through Sunday morning.

Without the structure of the prayer book, without the visual aids of candles, stained glass and crosses, without rows of pews facing everyone forward, I began to see and hear things that re-awakened me to the presence of God in the midst of our own praise of God. The Sacred Space congregation uses only a sheet of paper as their guide to worship, and everything else happens as it happens. There are no straight lines - people stand, sit, or lay wherever they may be. The prayers are spontaneous, lively, and deeply personal. There are theologians who wax at length about the nature of God and there are mystics who bring forth their own visions of God. The people are more the sermon than the preacher preaching, and communion literally moves from the center to the margins. Every time I distribute the Body of Christ, I find myself walking to the edges of the park, bringing Christ to those not actively participating in our service, but still standing or sitting (or even lying down) with their hands outstretched to receive something they without a doubt know is theirs to receive. And in the moment of transferring bread from my hand to theirs, I know that they have, in their unquestioning connection to God, brought Christ to me.

The Sacred Space Holy Communion happens in the wide open and often chaotic space of a park situated between the City Hall building and the BART tracks. And yet, the intimacy between people and God is so present; one

there is neither excess nor
hardness of heart

might think we were standing in the midst of a monastery or cloister. In the absence of the usual church accoutrements, the symbols of God are everywhere, marked on the faces of the congregation, formed in the words of their enthusiastic prayers, and lying in the outstretched hands that claim a piece of the Body simply because this congregation understands they are worthy of and created by God.

For each one of us, may it be so.

by The Reverend Lori Walton, St. James' Episcopal Church, Fremont

**In Memory
Joe white,
Died December 7, 2013**



Sacred Space Oakland - Our Songbird

When worship is held outdoors there are many sounds around the worshipers. Sometimes there are sirens of ambulance and police, or the sounds of people talking, or arguing, or praying.

One of the sweetest sounds is the voice of our Songbird. He sings in praise of our Lord and Maker out in the sun, rain or fog when the Spirit moves him. The favorite seems to be "The Eye of the Sparrow" which always brings down the house in tears.

I admire our Songbird's ability to praise God with his whole heart and mind despite the circumstances of his life.

He is a carpenter and has personal addiction challenges that prevent him from working consistently. His is not prevented from being grateful for God's presence in his life and we thank God for our Songbird's presence at Sacred Space. I wish I could attach a file of his praise singing.

If you want to hear him sing, drop by Sacred Space Oakland. He doesn't sing every week, but who knows, you might meet someone else praising God within life's most challenging circumstances: poverty, hunger, homelessness, recent imprisonment, health and mental health challenges, and loneliness.

Thanks be to God who walks with us through the darkness, lighting our way!

By The Rev. Mary Norquist Hinse



The Ecclesia Cross

Prayer for the Homeless



Lord Jesus, teach us to see who you see.

Help us to be a people who can't walk past without stopping and staying.

To meet a need, or listen to a story.

Make us always ready to comfort and to pray with those on our streets.

Keep us open to what you are asking us to do for each one.

Give us your courage to look people in the eye.

And your love to reach out in compassion.

Grant us, your peace so that we know we are in your hands, and doing your will.

As we step beyond what feels comfortable and safe

May your perfect love for a stranger, cast out our fear of them.

And leave us ready to be your hands and feet to them today.

Amen.

Brrrrrr, its cold out!

Thankfully, we have our warm homes to go to after shopping for food for our loved ones, thank fully we have a warm church to go to thank God for our blessings, thankfully we have our warm clothes and blankets to snuggle up by the fireplace on these cold frigid nights.

Now imagine those who live on the streets. They scrape around in garbage cans to get something to munch on, until one of the local churches offers breakfast or lunch so they can have something to eat. Then they have some warmth in their tummies for a little while Then they are back on the streets, (constantly walking so they won't get ticketed for loitering) wondering, will I be mugged or will I be alive tomorrow.

This friends is what it is like to be homeless, no heater or fireplace to keep you warm constantly worrying about where to sleep and where to be safe.

Sacred Space can offer just a little bit of comfort for an hour or so. With Sacred Space we offer a safe community where people feel at ease to laugh or to cry. They know they will have a caring shoulder to cry on, and attentive ears to listen about some of life's harrowing experiences.

On Sunday, December 8th was the beginning of a new adventure! This was the first Sunday of the Hayward Feeding Program ordinance. We offered our usual Sunday Liturgy at 2pm at the Hayward Park, but after our service was done, we moved about 5 blocks down the road to a privately owned park, where we were able to hand out lunches, water and many, many blankets, hats and gloves heavy jackets to our community. The amazing thing was that most of our congregants did not bat an eyelash at trekking that distance to get clothing and food.

On a sad note, one of our members, Joey, (who came to Sacred Space often on his own and sometimes with his girlfriend, Joanna), passed away on Saturday evening. On Sunday, Joanna mentioned to me that they were at Safeway. They were leaving the parking lot and while in the parking lot, they had a disagreement, and she went back to her place and left him behind. Later that evening, the police came by her place and began questioning her on her relationship with him and more personal things. After the questioning was completed, they told her that her boyfriend passed away due to hypothermia and she was devastated.

She was very distraught as you can imagine, and came to her community at Sacred Space where she could get comfort and support. I held her in my arms for a while and let her cry on my shoulder, Many members were present just to help her in anyway that they were able to. Whether it was with a word of encouragement, silent listening or warm hugs to let her know she was not alone.

At Sacred Space we can't offer much, but a little bit of food, comfort and yes at times like this, when needed peace and fellowship.

Another gentleman had a little puppy he found on the street just 4 days prior. He approached one of our volunteers and told her it was difficult to feed himself let alone a little puppy. He cried and our volunteer spoke with him and offered to give the puppy a home. He was overwhelmed with joy and yet sad, but knew it was the right thing to do for this little animal of God. Blessings were shared and the puppy has a new home, and this gentleman is happy that the puppy has a place to

live and be loved.

At Sacred Space, we never know what we are going to face, but like St. Francis of Assisi (our patron) we are always present to those who need us, whether a hug or a smile, we give it from our hearts.

By The Rev. John Trubina,
Deacon at St. Clare's and Sacred Space

Taking Showers to the Street

The first thing I want to say is thank you. Since the inception of Sacred Space Oakland we have seen a variety of volunteer "faces" pass through our midst at both Oakland and Hayward, some for a "one day only" engagement and others on a regular basis. Regardless of the frequency at which our volunteers come they are always appreciated and welcomed with open arms.

Thank you to all the churches, youth groups, individuals and families that have continued to show tremendous support with making sandwiches, hot lunches and providing music at our venues. You are amazing and are a blessing to more people than I think you will ever know.

Sacred Space Hayward continues to do well and people are adjusting to our having our service at the Park beside Hayward City Hall, then walking 6 blocks down to B Street and Walnut to Cannery Park to have lunches. Things are still in the works for a more permanent solution where we can combine service and lunch at one spot again. Please keep this in your prayers.

As I was talking to some of our congregants, the conversation turned to how grateful they were when they could launder their clothes and take a shower. It made me go home and feel a little guilty being able to take a shower and do laundry whenever I wanted. I found the following article that addresses how one ministry is "taking the showers to the streets!" I hope you find it as fascinating as I did.

By Tracy Brown

Click on title:
[The Surprising Way a Shower Could Save A Life](#)

Job - Homeless Outreach Worker

JOB DESCRIPTION

Under direction of the Executive Director performs social service work.

Responsible for assisting the homeless in obtaining access to eligible services, such as healthcare, housing and financial assistance and other related services. Be an emissary to assist in creating and maintaining social services available.

The Intake Coordinator ensures an empowering environment providing safety, structure, crisis intervention, advocacy, and problem-solving with residents. Employee must demonstrate an ability to form a professional working relationship with clients in an empathetic, respectful and non-judgmental way.

Performs related work as required.

For more information, please click on the link below:

[Homeless Outreach Worker - Job Description](#)

The School for Deacons 2014 Annual Inquirer's Day

Are you called to serve God in the church and the community? Interested in exploring a deacon's ministry? Learn more about your faith and develop gifts for ministry.

Join the School for Deacons and learn about the ministry and formation of the deacon, the school program, and curriculum. The day will include: Holy Eucharist with students and faculty, and a round-table discussion with the dean, faculty, and staff. Lunch with students and faculty hosted by the School for Deacons.

Saturday, March 8th, 7:45am - 1:00pm, at the
Church Divinity School of the Pacific, 2451 Ridge Road, Berkeley. mlhintz@sfd.edu There is a no cost lunch, hosted by

the school. RSVP: Mary Louise Hintz: , [510.848.1723](tel:510.848.1723).

Signup deadline is

Monday, March 3rd. For more information:

www.sfd.edu

What we are in need of

We are always in need of: toiletries (small bottles), razors, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, reading glasses and adult tube socks. With the nights cooling off we can expect an increase in requests for warm shirts/jackets and blankets.

If you have any questions regarding donations, please feel free to contact Tracy Brown at: glyfley@hotmail.com



*"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."
Mother Teresa*

You are now able to donate online to Sacred Space. We have PayPal to make donating easier and safer. Simply click on the [DONATE NOW](#) or from our [Webpage](#) and you will be taken automatically to PayPal.

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Volunteer

Sacred Space Oakland,

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anne.meyer5023@gmail.com

or

Sacred Space Hayward,

Please contact

Tracy Brown (Facilitator) at
glyfley@yahoo.com

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