

The Piper

May 2026



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A Message from Father Martin

Dear Friends,

Spring is upon us! I pray our souls are well-watered like the valley after our April rains, and our spirits are enjoying the sunshine and beauty around us. I pray we are being nourished by prayer, worship week by week (or as often as possible) and by Bible and other uplifting spiritual reading. We need to be as healthy as possible – spiritually and in community – for the living of these challenging days in our world and our lives. If you would like to speak further about any of this, please let me know, seek out a wise friend, and/or join us in church.

Holy Week and Easter services were wonderful. Thank you to all who helped organize, prepare, polish, welcome others, hide eggs, invite friends, and share in the celebration of Jesus' victory over death. We now are living this Easter season (50 days) in celebration that Christ is risen and we with him.

Our Vestry has set some important dates for the rest of the year:

- ◆ **Chili cook-off** will be Sunday, May 17. Sign up to enter your favorite chili. Organizers are Paul Balch and the Kjaergaard family.
- ◆ **Fourth of July Parade in Boulder Creek**. See Jane Pomeroy and Sharon Fishel for more information.
- ◆ **St. Andrew's 125th Anniversary Celebration** will be the weekend of Saturday, September 12-13. On Saturday, we will have a presentation of our history and a community party. Sunday we will celebrate God's grace through the years.

Watch for more information.

- ◆ **Celtic Sunday** / Kirking of the Tartans will be on Sunday, October 18. See Jane Pomeroy for more information.
- ◆ Meanwhile, our **Tuesday 11-Noon Bible Study** is reading 1st and 2nd Peter, followed by the Letters of John.
- ◆ Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 24 – **the Feast of Pentecost**. Wear red. We will reaffirm our baptismal identity (any one interested in being baptized?) Here is a Collect for the day:
O God, who on (the Day of Pentecost) taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in the Spirit's holy comfort; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

Martin+

Heifer International and the Church of the Brethren

You've seen the occasional gift made by St. Andrews to Heifer International at the request of our Outreach Committee. But were you aware that this organization was originally founded by a member of the Church of the Brethren?

Dan West, a member of the Church of the Brethren, worked as an aid worker during the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930's. While there, he was struck by the fact that so much of the aid being dispensed was both in short supply and required continued replenishment by donors, he came up with the idea of providing cows to those in need. In turn, the calves from these cows could be passed on to others in the community, building resiliency and self-sufficiency. In 1942, the Brethren Service Committee backed his work, and he put out a public appeal for support in the Brethren periodical *The Gospel Messenger*. At the time, West wasn't soliciting financial donations --- he was soliciting the cows themselves!

Because of the war, the first cows (named "Faith", "Hope", and "Charity") weren't delivered to Europe, as West had hoped, but rather to Puerto Rico and sharecroppers in the American South by the end of 1943. By the end of 1945, Heifers were making their way to Poland, Japan, Germany, and elsewhere. The growing effort was supported by many Brethren in the United States concerned with post-war recovery who were not free to involve themselves directly in recovery efforts.

As it grew, it gained support from other religious organizations, including the United Church of Christ, Northern Baptist Convention, Mennonite Central Committee, and the National Catholic Rural Life Society, and later UNRRA. Shipments of livestock were tended by "sea-going cowboys", youth attending the livestock headed overseas. Incorporating in 1953 as the nonprofit and broadly ecumenical Heifer International, the organization now contributes nearly 75% of its income (over US\$185M) to provide sustainable food and economic relief in the form of livestock, bees, seeds, and hands-on training to recipients in the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

Thanks for your support to this important organization! If you want to know more, check out these resources:

1. Donald Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1997)
2. Stephen Longenecker, *Brethren During the Age of World War*, (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 2006)
3. Heifer's History: You Asked, We Answered, <https://www.heifer.org/blog/heifers-history-you-asked-we-answered>, accessed April 19th, 2026.
4. Heifer International 2025 Annual Report, <https://www.heifer.org/about-us/inside-heifer/financial-information>, accessed April 19th, 2026.

Ray Rischpater, KF6GPE | kf6gpe.org | [@kf6gpe](https://twitter.com/kf6gpe)

Garden of



Eatin'

JAN HAGEL

These are Dutch cookies. The recipe came from my mother's cousin Julia Maurer. Sue Roe

1 cup butter

1 cup sugar

1 egg, separated

1 teaspoon Cinnamon

2 cups Flour

Finely ground pecans or other nuts

Cream butter and sugar. Add one egg yolk and beat well. Add cinnamon and flour and blend well. Use hands to form into a ball. Pat out on an ungreased cookie sheet, almost to edges. (I find it helpful to put a sheet of waxed paper over the dough and do the final spreading with a rolling pin.)

Brush top with egg white. Sprinkle liberally with minced pecans (or other nuts). Bake at 300 for about 25 minutes until done in center. Cut into bars while still hot. (A pizza cutter works well for this>). Remove from pan to waxed paper to cool.

COFFEE HOUR PROVIDERS

THANK YOU FOR ALL THE YUMMY THINGS YOU BRING US

If you are unable to bring coffee hour please call someone else on the list and also, please let the office know so we can put the correct provider in the bulletin. To let the office know please email staoffice@sbcglobal.net or call or text Sharon. I type bulletins, etc. at home so don't always see the updates in the parish hall.

Sharon Fishel Office: 831-247-5572

May 10

Martin & Eve Yabroff

May 17

Emily Kjaergaard

May 24

Janet Parske

May 31

Jennifer Kennedy

HeeHeeHee!!

Before performing a baptism, the priest approached the young father and said solemnly, "Baptism is a serious step. Are you prepared for it?"

"I think so," the man replied. "My wife has made appetizers and we have a caterer coming to provide plenty of cookies and cakes for all of our guests."

"I don't mean that," the priest responded. "I mean, are you prepared spiritually?"

"Oh, sure," came the reply. "I've got a keg of beer and a case of whiskey."

St. Andrew's Ministries

The Women's Circle



Dear Friends,

Women's Circle will meet Thursday May 7 at 6:30pm at the home of Sharon Fishel 232 Rancho Rio Ave, Ben Lomond. Then we will meet on Wednesday May 20 at 10:30am at the Parish Hall.

For questions contact Ann Moyer, 619 321-8596.

Men's Circle

Men's group will meet on Thursday, May 7, 6:30pm at the home of Pastor Martin Yabroff.

Questions? Call Brad Moyer 619-321-7316 or Christian Kjaergaard 650-864-4404.

LOSS (WINGS) Associated with Suicide Prevention Services of the Central Coast, it is a support (not therapy) group for anyone who has lost someone to suicide, years ago or recently. They meet on the 4th Tuesdays from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. For more information, contact Julie Cory at 831-246-8750.

Prayer Team

We have an active prayer team at St. Andrew's led by Sue Roe. When a prayer concern is made known to Sue, she sends it out to the group so they can be praying for you. Please contact Sue if you would like some prayers.

Also, if you would like to be one of the pray-ers, let Sue know and she will be happy to add you to the group.

Please contact Sue at Phone 562-243-4080, or by email suemhr@aol.com

Outreach Committee

If you know of or support a non-profit organization and would like it to be considered for a grant from St. Andrew's, please provide information on its programs to the Outreach Committee. The members of the committee are Joan McVay, Janet Parske and Ray Rischpater. We are looking for additional committee members, so if you are interested, please contact Joan, Janet or Ray. The committee generally meets after Bible Study, on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholic and Dysfunctional Families) meets every Wednesday evening upstairs at 6:30 pm.

Men's AA meets upstairs on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm.

Thoughts for the Month

A member of the church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the pastor decided to visit him.

It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited.

The pastor made himself at home but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The pastor glanced at his watch and realized it was time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow, once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said with a tear running down his cheek, 'Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I will be back in church next Sunday.'

We live in a world today, which tries to say too much with too little. Consequently, few listen. Sometimes the best sermons are the ones left unspoken.

Consider the familiar Psalm 23:
The Lord is my Shepherd ----- that's a Relationship!
I shall not want ----- that's Supply!
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ----that's Rest!
He leadeth me beside the still waters -----that's Refreshment!
He restoreth my soul ----- that's Healing!
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness --that's Guidance!
For His name sake ----- that's Purpose!
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death--that's
Testing!
I will fear no evil ----- that's Protection!
For Thou art with me ----- that's Faithfulness!
My cup runneth over ----- that's Abundance!
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life----
that's Blessing!
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord -----that's Security!
Forever ----- that's Eternity!
Face it, God loves you! What is most valuable is not what we have in
our lives, but WHO is in our lives!

Reflections on Mortality, Pilgrimage and Gratitude

The Reverend Martin Yabroff
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Ben Lomond, CA
September 2023

(highlighted references refer to articles, books, and videos— you can search the phrase or I can share a Word doc. with live hyperlinks.)

A THOUGHT-PROVOKING ARTICLE

A recent perspective in the Washington Post has prompted me to offer the following reflections on life and mortality – a personal set of connections among authors I have found valuable in this regard – which I am sharing with friends and colleagues for their own reflection and perhaps further conversations.

Santa Cruz author Amy Ettinger published an essay: "*I am dying at age 49. Here's why I have no regrets.*" on August 27, 2023 in the Washington Post. Ettinger shares her appropriate shock, sadness, anger and confusion about her rare, aggressive and incurable cancer. She is thankful for many blessings in her life, including her husband and 14-year-old daughter whom she adores, a meaningful writing career, and the beautiful locale in which she lives. While she acknowledges challenges encountered on her life journey, she does not regret the way she has lived her life. And she has a healthy acceptance of who she is and has become.

In her thoughtful essay, Ettinger does not mention any religious faith or spiritual reflections on mortality. I do not intend to offer or imply any judgement or comment on her essay or life. Her perspective, as presented by her, has prompted my own reflections, which I now share with others. I commend her essay to all as part of this conversation.

REFLECTING ON MORTALITY

Early in *The Rule of St. Benedict* (chapter 5), in a chapter titled "[The Tools for Good Works](#)", Benedict writes: "*Day by day remind yourself that you are going to die.*" This is not to incite gloom or despair. It is a tool for clarity and perspective. The Benedictine Brother David Steindl-Rast writes of this teaching: "It isn't primarily a practice of thinking of one's last hour, or of death as a physical phenomenon; it is a seeing of any moment of life against the horizon of death, and a challenge to incorporate that awareness of dying into every moment so as to become more fully alive." ("[Learning to Die](#)")

Mary Oliver's poem "[When Death Comes](#)" expresses this hope for living fully, as in: "... When it's over, I want to say all my life

*I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.*

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Reflections on Mortality (Continued)

*When it's over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.
I don't want to end up simply having visited this world"*

We hear in the Psalms: "Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom." (Ps. 90:12) Such perspective – on our lives, our experiences thus far (positive and negative), remembered with acceptance that they were as they were, with a range of feelings about life thus far – may then help us to live in the present and towards the future, be it decades, years, days or hours – to live our time well, with meaning.

A key to such living well is letting go. A few weeks after reading Ettinger's article, the appointed Gospel reading for that Sunday was one of Jesus' frequent teachings on letting go of life in order to receive it. If we try to hold on to – to save or control – our lives, we lose them. But if we let go – opening our hands to receive rather than clutching what we try to own or control, then with open hands and hearts we may receive blessings and goodness. Such blessings and goodness may have been already in our lives, perhaps in part, but our anxious controlling hindered the grace of such love, beauty and presence.

Thus Jesus' parable of the grain of wheat: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit." (John 12:24)

The last meditations of the Indian Jesuit [Anthony de Mello](#), on the way to love requiring letting go of attachment, are also relevant here. (I find these very challenging yet thus far undeniable.)

PILGRIMAGE

There are two themes that I am finding very rich and helpful in facing mortality and seeking to live well in that light. The first is the notion of pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is a spiritual quest towards a goal or destination in which the quest itself is the blessing, goal or purpose sought. For instance, you might set off on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to Iona, or along the Camino. But you cannot go on a quest to find God without coming to realize that God is with you on the journey. The pilgrimage is not simply a matter of traveling from A to B, but rather an intentional opportunity to learn, observe, and be formed and changed in the course of one's journey.

Two books that have been most helpful for me in this regard are [Without Oars: Casting Off into a Life of Pilgrimage](#), by Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, and [The Art of Pilgrimage: The Seeker's Guide for Making Travel Sacred](#), by Phil Cousineau.

Granberg-Michaelson especially explores how a key task in a pilgrimage is to shed what one does not need to carry along. Letting go of stuff that was useful in the past but no longer needed. Such 'stuff' can include beliefs and expectations as well as achievements and attitudes that were perhaps helpful or needed in the past but now hinder one's journey and living. Such shedding can result not in deprivation and suffering but liberation and joy.

His last chapter, "*Leaving Life*", reflects on one's whole life as a pilgrimage leading ultimately to the crossing of a threshold "in the hope of entering a sacred space full of God's presence." Let me share an extended passage:

"Making this final step in our pilgrimage with grace depends on learning to die before we die. In successive steps, the pilgrim is nudged to give up some level of control. That starts with the predictability of our normal lives. Then the abandonment of our reliance on a curated, virtual self. We give up our need for immediate solutions and instant gratification. We let go of secure identities shaped by life's early needs. We relinquish trying to control our journey through 'right' creeds and rational systems of belief. We dismiss predictable piety that serves spiritual comfort over spiritual growth.

We admit the folly of planning for expected outcomes that omit grace. We give up a view of reality that robs the world of its enchanted wonder. We liberate our lives and the lives of others from the control of the modern Empire.

"At each of these steps, we discover life – true life made richer, fuller, freer, and filled with the Spirit's presence. All these steps, however, require that we die to our self in these various ways. We can describe this as our old self, or, as we have said, our false self. Or we can describe this, like Jesus did, as the grain of wheat that must fall and die if it is to bear abundant fruit. Such dying to self always means giving up some level of the control that we crave." (p. 148)

Personally, I find this passage and perspective very challenging – I am working on it. I also believe that such letting go and dying to self is in no way passive or apathetic. Instead, it can empower activism for social justice and reconciliation.

Cousineau offers "Five excellent practices of pilgrimages, inspired by a fifth-century conversation between Zi Zhang and Confucius about the practices of wise rulers:

*Practice the arts of attention and listening.
Practice renewing yourself every day.
Practice meandering toward the center of every place.
Practice the ritual of reading sacred texts.
Practice gratitude and praise-singing." (p. 126)*

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Reflections on Mortality (Continued)

GRATITUDE

The second theme that I am finding very helpful in facing mortality is gratitude.

Brother David Steindl-Rast is a wonderful teacher and exemplar of gratitude. His talk *A Grateful Day* focuses on the gift of today, to be appreciated as if it were the first day of your life or the last day of it. Either perspective can lead to spending this day very well.

He speaks of marveling at life, at the gift of being able to see, the colors around us, the sky above, the faces of people you meet and all the stories that are theirs and their ancestors. He speaks of being open to blessings, letting them flow through you so that everyone you meet will be blessed by you, by your presence.

Gratitude is both a practice that one sets one's mind to and an open-ness to acknowledge and receive the grace that is offered.

As a practice, it is to attend – to pay attention – to the present moment or experience or situation, rather than focusing on the past or the expected / anticipated / feared future. It is to pay attention to what is, be it mundane and ordinary or new and exciting.

Jack Kornfield's book *No Time like the Present* has been helpful for me in this light.

Jesus' teaching about the birds of the air and the lilies of the field (Luke 12:22-32) comes to mind as well.

As an awareness or open-ness, gratitude is to receive what is good in what might seem ordinary or inconsequential experiences. To hold a baby though he may often be squirming or fussy or crawling into trouble. To pause to look at the trees, the sky, the bright or subtle colors at hand. To appreciate the goodness of where you are though it may not be where you expected or wished you would be. (Recall here Philippians 4:8 – 'whatever is good, true, beautiful, think on these things.')

To be grateful – thankful – for the life one is living – with all its messiness, its fallibilities, its humanity, its trials and its joys – this seems a very good way to live in the face of our mortality. It is to trust the love and mercy and grace of God. It is to enjoy and share with others the mystery of life, of love, and peace. It is to live well.

May God lead us all in living with gratitude and grace, as pilgrims journeying, as Celtic tradition would say it, to the place of our resurrection.

Amen.

Meanderings from a Wanderer

At the beginning of my “pilgrimage” (at the time, I did not know that was what it was or would become), I started “downsizing”, cleaning out drawers and closets and giving away, throwing away, donating “stuff” that I’d been collecting/buying/receiving for somewhere around 50 years!! Included in that was also “stuff” that David had been saving/collecting/receiving since he was about 5 years old!!

It was laborious and emotional and exhausting. There were some boxes set aside for “later”, not knowing if or when that later would come! Other stuff was “no-brainer”, with me wondering why I had kept it in the first place. I struggled with David’s things especially, knowing how he treasured his “stuff”, loved sharing the history of it, the memories, and the legacies. The Veteran’s Resource Center in Marina was the recipient of much of the military memorabilia collected during his 35+ year military career. His daughter, Katie, ended up with the bulk of the remaining stuff for her to deal with “later”!

As to my “stuff”, a very few things went to one sister or another and to a few close friends, but primarily it was donated to a couple of local charities and to the dump! My son very clearly told me he was NOT interested in my “junk”!! He is very much a minimalist -- and does not keep treasures like birthday cards, precious teddy bears, lighthouses, or any number of things that I felt were valuable at one time or another.

So, I am now contemplating moving to San Miguel “forever”, however long that may indeed be for! And figuring out what to do with the last of my “stuff” is on the forefront of my thinking. Paying almost \$300 a month for a storage unit seems to be a bit of a frivolous spend of money. It’s one thing to have stuff that you rarely use or look at stored in closets or under beds or in a garage, but totally another to pay thousands of dollars a year to house it.

My last trip to Santa Cruz was taken to have a couple of doctor visits and to go to the storage unit to get a few things to take back to Mexico, and also see what else “needs” to go to Mexico permanently. In actuality, I’ve lived for 7 months without any of the stuff in storage; however, there are some things that would make my home more mine and would make my life a bit more comfortable. Then there are the things that I shook my head and laughed at myself, and my friend said why in the world did you keep THAT?!!! And, I can certainly figure out a much better use of the \$300 a month!!

Looking at my things through someone else’s eyes was an eye-opener for me!! And, it was interesting what came up for me during those hours spent sorting and looking. A rush of memories – a shake of my head at the ridiculousness of some of it – and a want/need to be surrounded by my familiar things. And, now, getting rid of some of it on this go-round, and planning on the next re-look and final transport to Mexico, has me really considering what is precious or not. I believe this shedding of things is a positive note to the process of pilgrimage – taking time to consider what is needed vs wanted, what is valuable vs convenient, and what we want to surround ourselves with day after day.

Happy Downsizing!!

Susan Greer



St. Andrew's Vestry Members

Jane Pomeroy , Senior Warden

John Woolliscroft, Junior Warden

Rochelle Kelly

Joan McVay

Sheryl Mello

Brad Moyer

Ray Rischpater

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, please forward them to any of the Vestry members. Vestry meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 1 pm in the Parish Hall.

Join us for Worship Services on Sundays at 10 a.m. and the social hour after. The sermon may be watched on St. Andrew's Facebook page, if you are not able to attend in person.