



# Pullen News

AUGUST 1, 2020

*What does God require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. —Micah 6:8*

## The Question Everyone is Asking

*How are you doing?* This question has become the starting place for almost all my conversations these days. As I listen to people respond, and respond to this question myself, I am discovering that it is not as easy to answer as it was pre-pandemic. Life is a bit more complicated and complex these days. Not that life wasn't complicated and complex before March 2020. It was. Even before the pandemic many families struggled with childcare and work, with trying to figure out how to pay the bills on a decreased or already minimum wage that is not a living wage, how to navigate an exclusive healthcare system, how to deal with depression and mental illness, and how to survive social isolation just to name a few of life's everyday challenges. Now that we are in the middle of a pandemic, many of us have had our consciousness raised with these daily struggles either by experiencing them ourselves or seeing them more clearly in our communities.

Maybe you know this about me by now, but I am a mantra person. At various times in my life I seek out mantras that express how I want to be and live and treat others. These mantras can be from scripture, poems, quotes, or things I make up - whatever expresses the intention of how I want to move around in this world. Lately, the mantra that has been on my mind is one that was said to me years ago as I was going through a difficult time. As I was sharing my grief and weariness with a wise mentor, my mentor looked at me and said: "Nancy, be gentle with yourself. Be gentle with yourself." I have never forgotten that. It has remained with me because generally speaking I am not a gentle person with myself. I tend to be more gentle with others - offering others forgiveness and kindness and understanding more easily than I offer these things to myself.

Lately, I have felt myself a little more on edge. In a couple of situations, I have not responded with my best self. And this has troubled me lately. Why, I ask myself, am I responding in ways that I don't want to? And then I remember: these are challenging days. We are living through a global pandemic and thousands of people are dying daily from it and our country doesn't seem to have a plan. Our nation is politically unstable - raging a war on the poor, ignoring systemic racism, turning a blind eye and deaf ear to ecological devastation, and turning back the clock on voting rights. I don't get to gather in-person with my faith community for support and encouragement and courage that I sometimes need to face the challenges of the week. And the question comes: *How are you doing?*

The answer to *how* I am doing is: up and down. I have good days and challenging days. But there is another question that may be as important to ask as the *how are you doing?* That question is: *What I am doing to make it through these days?* And to that question: I am trying to be honest with myself about how I am doing. I am reaching out to friends for support when I need to and not trying to "go at it all by myself" or placing more on the person I live with than is appropriate. I am trying to eat well and get exercise when I can. But mostly, I am repeating the mantra: *Be gentle with yourself and be gentle with others.* I am trying to offer myself more forgiveness, kindness and understanding and in turn do the same with others. And so I say to you: Be gentle with yourself. These are challenging days and we all need some gentleness and kindness and understanding.

—Nancy Petty

## #ParableChallenge Response

On Sunday, July 26, I issued a "parable challenge" in my sermon. I invited you to imagine how Jesus might describe the kingdom of God in the context of our 21<sup>st</sup> century lives. What from our everyday lives might we point to that would evoke images of the beloved community of God? Several of you took the challenge. I am keeping my word now and sharing your parables with the congregation. They are in the order I received them, and they are continued on our website.

Thank you to those who responded and to those who continue to help build God's kingdom in our world today.

*Parables on page two...*

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## Parable Challenge, Continued:

**Parable #1&2:** The kingdom of God is the stench of a porta-potty in a downtown of closed doors. It's the cleaned, anti-bacterialization of porcelain thrones in air-conditioned churches unavailable to the huddled masses yearning to breathe free from the toxins of porta-potty blue lagoons.

The kingdom of God is a perfectly pruned, mulched and fertilized Siler Garden, beauty holds the buried souls of Pullen Ancestors without a vegetable, fruit or herb in sight for the hungry seeking refuge in its lush shade. *—Clinton Wright*

**Parable #3:** The kingdom of heaven is like a four-year-old child who wants to be beside you from morning until night. The curious little eyes want to see what you're doing and how you're doing it; the curious little hands touch your work. You soon lose count of how many times that little voice pipes up asking you *why things are as they are and what if we didn't do things this way.* *—Michelle Hunter*

**Parable #4:** Our Lord and Savior came to change the world in his time. He suffered and died as he lifted up those who were shunned, exploited, sick and oppressed. He brought the messages of "Good Trouble".

John Lewis, like Martin Luther King and other notable Civil Rights Leaders, took on Racism and Economic Injustices to make changes. They too spoke "Good Trouble" and demanded new laws.

Some change came but more is needed and now our youth, black and white, in this country and all races around the world are united to the call of "Good Trouble." May the Holy Spirit keep the youth and all of their supporters "Eyes on the Prize as they hold on" to revise the culture that eradicates racism, social inequality and values and protects the Earth's resources of the Beloved Community in this Century! *—Janet Wise Thomas*

**Parable #5:** Here's a haiku - as parable in seven words - that I wrote upon encountering an old plum tree. *—Steve Braun*

*old plum  
mere remnant of itself...  
blooms*

**Parable #6:** The Bird Feeder or Black Lives Matter

I have a bird feeder in my backyard which I fill with seeds, freeze dried mealworms and chili powder to ward off the squirrels. Chili burns the squirrels' mouths, but not the mouths of birds. I become very angry when a flock of black-birds (crows?) descend on the feeder, and within a few minutes empty out the entire contents leaving nothing. Watching them completely flock around the feeder means that in a few minutes, there will be no reason for the beautiful red headed woodpeckers, the cardinals and robins to visit. Neither the black birds nor plain brown birds were what I consider beautiful birds worthy of the food I provided. Plus all you see are a feeding frenzy all over the feeder! A place at my bird feeder was not all inclusive. It was just for the birds I judged worthy because I liked the way they looked.

Working with many organizations such as the Japanese organizations, which recently held nationwide demonstrations with Native Americans, incarcerated, immigration centers and the BLM movement shows my support for ending racism and discrimination against all who believe in the superiority of white, heterosexual people.

Interesting that I never realized until today's challenge to write a parable that I found that there isn't a place for all at my table. *—Janice Overman*

*For more parables, please visit the [Pullen website here.](#)*

*If you would like to contribute a parable, email it to [npetty@pullen.org](mailto:npetty@pullen.org) and [news@pullen.org](mailto:news@pullen.org).*



### Hope Center Updates

Your support continues to mean the world to us, particularly as our young adults weather the unemployment and mental health challenges brought about by the pandemic. Thank you!!

Kelliann recently filmed [this video](#) to share how you've helped ensure that 93% of our former foster youth successfully maintained housing during the pandemic. We have 3 clients set to move into new apartments in the next month - check out our [Facebook page](#) throughout the month for updates on their stories.

*—Erin Witcher*

### Emergency Assistance Partnership with First Baptist Church and Wake County

First Baptist Church and Pullen are partnering with Wake County Department of Housing to offer emergency rental and utility assistance. Combined resources will allow faith communities to focus on one-time assistance while being able to engage Human and Health Services at Wake County to provide long-term support. This venture is set to launch August 1 and will be virtual at first. If you are interested in volunteering, then contact me at [bcrisp@pullen.org](mailto:bcrisp@pullen.org).

*—Brian Crisp*

## We grieve with:

- ☞ Larkin Taylor-Parker in the death of her grandmother, June Driscoll, who died on July 6 in Arlington, TX due to COVID-19.
- ☞ Barbara Ann Hughes in the death of her sister-in-law, Ruth Hughes Farmer, who died on July 16 in Asheville.
- ☞ The family of former Pullen member, Darrel Baker, who died on July 23 in Chesterfield, VA. Darrel had recently retired as a chaplain at Virginia Commonwealth University Hospital.
- ☞ Holly Harris in the death of her mother, Gertrude (Trudy) Fox, who died on July 26 at her home in Hagerstown, Maryland at the age of 100. A graveside service for immediate family was held this week in Hagerstown.

## We celebrate with:

- ☞ Cindy and Bob Chew who celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on July 24.

## Looking Ahead - Budget Planning for 2021

This time of year is the traditional time when we look forward to next year's budget and next year's church outreach and ministry which that budget represents. Our Finance Committee met two weeks ago and voted unanimously to recommend that Pullen Church promote a budget for 2021 which maintains the same financial requirements as does our current budget for 2020. As we recommend this path, we recognize that even though we are not recommending an increase in the budget for next year, we also recognize that pledging and supporting such a budget will itself be a challenge. We are asking our Councils and Committees to work within the current budget parameters for their area of responsibility, allowing for reallocation between line items but taking care that the total budget for that area remains the same.

Our 2021 Stewardship Chair, Jim Zupancic, is already at work on creative and meaningful ideas for supporting the 2021 budget promotion. As you may remember, the church has been able to support our budgets in recent years because we could count on a predictable income of some 8% of the total budget coming from non-pledged sources, i.e., gathered offerings on Sundays in worship. We have not been able to count on those resources coming our way as regularly during the Pandemic period as we would have expected if we were gathering together in person. Part of our promotion of the 2021 budget will be to creatively imagine ways to fill that gap.

We are reminded that one dim hope of these uncertain times and even chaos is that there is sometimes an openness to see things differently that was not present when there is the expectation, and the perceived ability, to maintain an order of things. We are, with you, grateful to have the mooring of Pullen Church to help us. It is in this spirit that we begin planning for 2021.

*-Jim Jarrard, Finance Committee Chair*

### As of July 31, 2020

<b>Gifts to Date:</b>	<b>\$ 742,121.59</b>
<b>Expenses to Date:</b>	<b>\$ <u>662,523.35</u></b>
<b>Difference:</b>	<b>\$ 79,598.24</b>

*- Brian Crisp*



## Environmental Racial Justice in the Age of Climate Change and Pandemic

**Thursday, August 6, 6:30-8:00 pm**

[Click here to register for this Zoom event](#)

Join Interfaith Creation Care of the Triangle, Orange Chatham Interfaith Creation Care, and Campaign Non-violence NC as we explore environmental justice in the age of climate change and pandemic. Coverage will include who is at risk, what are the risks, and what can individuals of faith do to minimize the impacts of climate change to communities most at risk. Our special guest, Ryan Emanuel, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor and Faculty Scholar at NC State's College of Natural Resources and a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina.

*-Lynn Lyle*

## CCN Virtual Pilgrimage October 15 -17

Our partners at the Community of Cross of Nails in Coventry will be hosting a virtual pilgrimage and gathering on Thursday, October 15th through Saturday, October 17th. This international gathering will be virtual with three-hour sessions in the morning. The Community of the Cross of Nails is a worldwide network of over 200 churches, charities, peace-building centres, and educational and training organizations, inspired by the Coventry story of destruction, rebuilding and renewal, and active in reconciliation in our own ways.

If you are interested in this virtual pilgrimage, then please contact me at [bcrisp@pullen.org](mailto:bcrisp@pullen.org) by September 1.

## Ever Embracing, Ever Becoming

It's been amazing seeing many of you at The Table on Wednesday nights! We continue this virtual gathering in August still reflecting on the theme Ever Embracing, Ever Becoming and engaging the work of anti-racism. We begin at 6:00 pm with time to check-in, lift announcements and offer prayers. Our more formal conversation is from 6:30-7:30 pm.



You must register to attend. Once you have registered you can attend any of the sessions. See the schedule below and join us at The Table! [Register online here.](#)

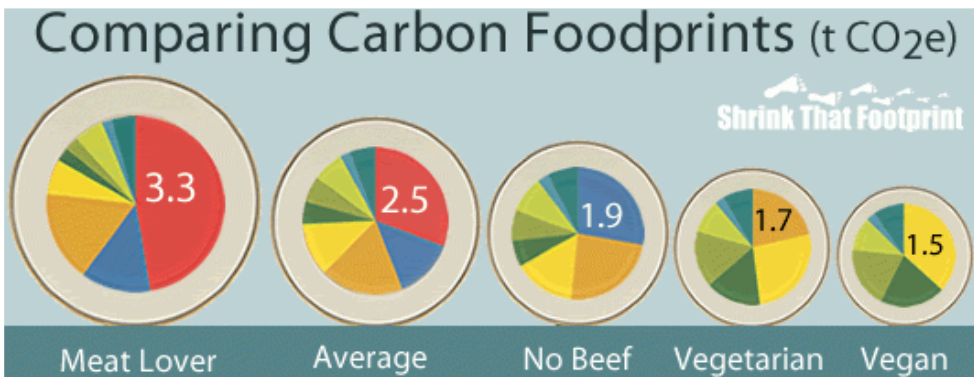
- ♦ Aug 5 Table Talk: Howard Thurman, Jesus and the Disinherited, Katey Zeh
- ♦ Aug 12 Intro to Womanism, Angela Whitenhill-Shields
- ♦ Aug 19 Table Talk: Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground*, Brian Crisp
- ♦ Aug 26 Faces of Activism, Jendaya Hill, Braeden Oliver, & Greear Webb

Please contact me at [covey@pullen.org](mailto:covey@pullen.org) if you have questions. -Chalice Overy

## August 2020 Earth Ministry Challenge - Eat Less Meat!

In his 2005 encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis says that climate change is the social justice issue of our time. With the effects of climate change becoming more obvious and government solutions stalled, what can people of faith do that will make a difference? Transitioning to a plant-rich diet is one of the most powerful ways a person can reduce their carbon footprint.

For many meat eaters, the thought of eating that last hamburger or grilled chicken is more than they can bear. But there are powerful reasons to do so. Transitioning to a diet that is plant-rich offers tremendous benefits to human health and the environment. Plant-rich diets based on whole foods may reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and much more. Eating more plants also slows global warming, reduces deforestation, protects water and soil, and reduces fossil fuel and fertilizer use. But just how much of a difference does our food choice make?



The Carbon Footprint of 5 Diets Compared (8): Red: beef and lamb, Blue: chicken, pork and fish, Orange: dairy, Yellow: cereals/breads, Dark green: vegetables, Olive green: Fruit, Light green: oils, spreads, Blue green: snacks and sugars, Dark blue green: drinks

Our carbon, foodprints are measured in tonnes. One tonne = 2,200 lbs. According to *The Carbon Footprint of 5 Diets Compared (8)*, an American meat lover diet emits 7,260 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>/yr. While a

vegan diet emits just 3,300 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>/yr (45% of the meat lover diet). When all beef is replaced by chicken, (the no beef diet) emissions are 4,180 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>/yr (58% of the meat lover diet). In a separate UK dietary study (9), the data shows that a pescatarian (fish) or vegetarian diet cuts your footprint in half.

It's astonishing to think that just one food, beef, creates 10% of the world's human related greenhouse gases because cows belch methane (5). Amazingly, substituting beans for beef, could do more to reduce your carbon footprint than downsizing your car (1). The Brazilian rainforest continues to be destroyed largely due to cattle ranching. In fact, in 2019, the Amazon Rain Forest saw its biggest spike in deforestation in over a decade partly due to a spike in forest fires (10).

If Americans gave up beef for beans, they would free up 42% of U.S. farmland. These lands could be returned to grassland and forest ecosystems that will pull CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and return it to the soil for storage and plant nourishment. More pasturelands and woodlands would provide habitat for many species of animals and plants that are currently struggling to survive.

If you have not yet considered reducing or eliminating meat from your diet, please consider it now! Visit our Earth Ministry page for links to strategies such as Meatless Mondays, Vegan before 6pm, or Weekday Vegetarians. For the sake of God's Creation and future generations, please begin the journey toward a plant-rich or meatless diet today!

Visit our Earth Ministry Webpage for strategies to eat less meat—[pullen.org/earthministry](http://pullen.org/earthministry)

### References