

Bulletin Board

July 5, 2019

Dear Friends,

The following is an article published in "Sojourners" magazine on June 29, 2019. It was written by the Episcopal Bishop of Rio Grande, Michael Hunn. I believe the bishop's reflections on "the crisis along the border" demonstrate his faithfulness to the Gospel as well as his capacity for critical thought. It is a very worthwhile read.

Peace,

Susan+

PRISONS WEREN'T BUILT FOR CHILDREN. HERE'S WHAT WE CAN DO

This past week we began to hear about the appalling conditions at the detention center in Clint, Texas, where some 300 children had been held for weeks without soap and toothbrushes or adequate food, clothing, and bedding. Official responses from various government agencies all say the same thing: "Our short-term holding facilities were not designed to hold vulnerable populations, and we urgently need additional humanitarian funding to manage this crisis."

We hear that Homeland Security and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection don't have the food, clothing, soap, toothbrushes, or art supplies to care for children in need. We hear that our detention facilities do not have diapers for the children or appropriate food for nursing mothers. Children in custody of the United States government haven't had a bath in weeks.

Before the finger pointing and blaming begins let me be clear: This is not a partisan issue. This is not a political issue. This is a moral issue.

We have a moral responsibility to ensure that the conditions for every child are not just adequate but are as good as any parent would expect for their own children.

I serve as Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of the Rio Grande, which includes the city of El Paso, Texas, the Big Bend region, and the entire state of New Mexico. Our diocese holds 40 percent of the border between the United States and Mexico. Border Patrol agents and their families are members of our congregations. The Episcopal Church is about half Republican and half Democrat. Yet every Sunday, we pray the same prayers to the same God, and then we get to work together, in spite of our differences, to make the world more like the one God envisions.

On this we can all agree: Children should not be treated as these children have been — not on our watch!

We are using a prison system to care for families and children. Our border system is designed for adult males who cross the border illegally seeking work. Some of the temporary facilities currently holding children are simply high-grade tents that cannot structurally offer care for children,

particularly as temperatures along the Rio Grande rise. Other “detention centers” are surrounded by barbed wire. Cells are made of concrete with stainless steel toilets in the cells. There are bars on windows and doors. The staff are trained as prison wardens. When prison facilities are used to care for children, there isn’t much care. Prisons aren’t designed to care — they’re designed to punish.

I don’t think we need to close the detention centers — they may be appropriate for drug traffickers, human traffickers, and arms dealers — but children and families should not be held in prisons under any circumstances.

Here’s what we can do

Immediately, we need to stop treating asylum seekers and refugee children as if they are criminals. We need to get diapers, food, clothing, and medical care to the detention centers and Border Patrol stations.

And the resources are packed and ready to go!

For months now in towns across our diocese, the interfaith community has been stockpiling resources including food, clothing, soap, toothbrushes, art supplies, soccer balls, and backpacks. Working with the Border Patrol, the Department of Homeland Security, and local government, we have already assisted thousands of families seeking asylum to get settled in the United States with their sponsoring families.

As busloads of families have arrived in El Paso, Las Cruces, Deming, and Albuquerque, they have been greeted with love and concern, hot showers, food, and safe, comfortable places to sleep. Volunteer nurses and doctors provided medical care. After sheltering them for a day or two, volunteers have driven these families to bus stations and train stations where they traveled to sponsoring families in the United States.

We are not prison guards; we are people of faith motivated by love and compassion. We’re good at this! We only want to help. And we also have grandparents and parents and professionals (who already have background checks) who love working with and caring for children. I have no doubt these same volunteers would jump at the chance to care for the children suffering in detention centers run by the United States government.

I’m not saying the churches are the long-term solution to this humanitarian crisis — they shouldn’t be. But in the short term — TODAY! — we can deliver diapers and soap, food, and clothes. Tomorrow we can bring blankets and pillows. We want to help.

Here in the Diocese of the Rio Grande, we are reaching out to our contacts with the Border Patrol and to our interfaith partners as we endeavor to figure out how best to get the love, care, and supplies where they are desperately needed.

But we can’t simply throw more money at the problem. Even if Congress authorized significant funding, we must recognize that spending more on a prison system will only result in more cells. What we need is a completely different approach that treats refugees and asylum seekers as trauma survivors in need of care, not as prisoners.

Even while we’re supplying the government facilities with enough food, clothes, and diapers, we, as one nation under God, indivisible, can begin figuring out where we can shelter refugee children and asylum seekers so they aren’t in prison.

We can treat this situation as it is — a humanitarian crisis — and we can respond accordingly, with humanitarian disaster relief.

The secrecy surrounding where children are being detained and how many children are being held is not helping the situation. Full transparency about how each child is being treated is necessary. I call upon the Congress of the United States to conduct an investigation to ascertain where each child is being held and to disclose that information to the public so communities can partner with the government to provide the care necessary to assist those in need.

In the future

Long term, we need a system equipped to appropriately care for refugees and asylum seekers, and with all appropriate speed, to process their asylum claims. Care, not punishment is what they deserve. Good food, medical care, safe shelters, playgrounds and activities for children, language services, and legal counsel is what they need.

We also need a better system to tell the difference between criminals and asylum seekers: more judges, more social workers, more interpreters, more administrative support.

And we need a thorough investigation into this situation so that no child will ever again be treated with neglect and disrespect at the hands of the United States.

Now is not the time to make children pawns in the election game. This is not a partisan issue. It is a moral issue, and not a complicated one. We must balance our need for safety — strong border enforcement protecting the U.S. from drug traffickers, sex traffickers, and arms dealers — with a compassionate response to refugees and those seeking asylum.

The Golden Rule is not too much to ask: that we do unto other's children as we would do to our own children.

The Rt. Rev. Michael Hull

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM OUR NEW SENIOR WARDEN, RICK POWELL:

The Flower Guild is in need of vases

Weekly, after the Sunday service, the Flower Guild distributes beautiful arrangements to the infirm or ill on our Intercession List. In order to continue this practice, they are in need of vases that can hold medium sized arrangements (no bud vases needed). Please drop off any vases you have to donate to the Parish Office.



AND

Still searching for UNUSED Keys:

For safety & security purposes, St. Mark's should have an accurate listing of all church keys. Kim Littell is in the process of matching/confirming church members with their assigned keys. Kim will be calling all members that have "checked out" keys. If you wish to help us speed this process, please email him (klittell612@gmail.com) with the identifying letters and numbers on each church key in your possession. We appreciate your support and cooperation in attempting to complete this task by August 31, 2019.

**WITH GREAT THANKS
IN BOTH MATTERS,
RICK**

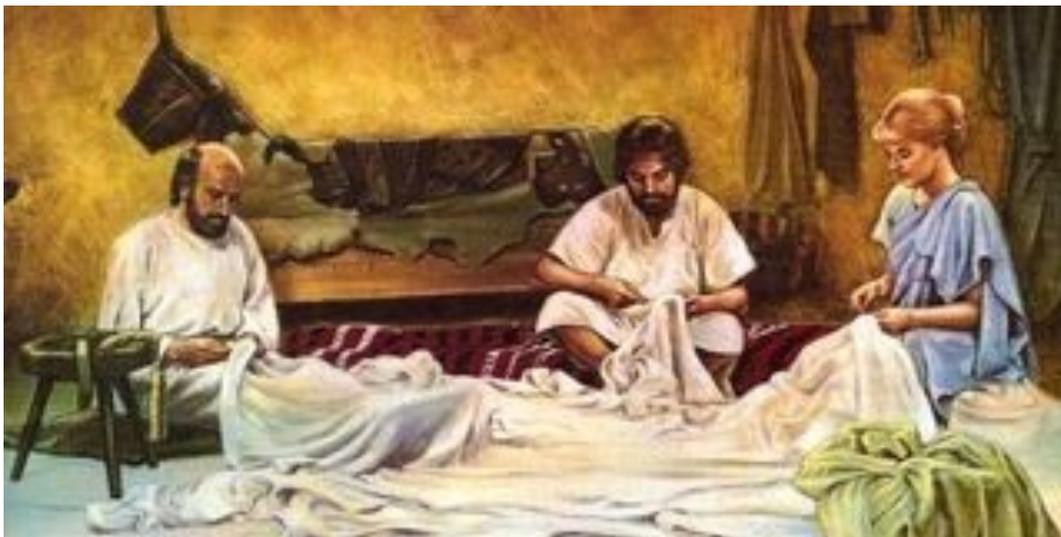
PLEASE NOTE:

**THERE WILL NOT BE A SECOND
SUNDAY POTLUCK THIS MONTH.**

Saint of the Week

Priscilla and Aquila, Companions of the Apostle Paul

July 8 is the day we recognize a married couple who were missionaries in the early church. Priscilla and Aquila were one of the very few married couples mentioned in the New Testament. In fact, they are mentioned 6 times in 4 different books of the New Testament. Priscilla and Aquila were Jews from Asia Minor who settled in Rome where they worked as tent makers. When the Roman Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome in 49-51, the couple moved to Corinth. They became Christians in Rome or Corinth. In Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila became friends with the Apostle Paul, who was also a tent maker. Paul lived and worked with them for a time and then the 3 set off for Ephesus. Contrary to the usual position of women at this time, Priscilla participated equally in the work of the church, and both Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos, an important 1st century Christian evangelist. Some scholars believe that Priscilla may be the anonymous author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Priscilla and Aquila were probably martyred in Ephesus by pagans.



Nature Note

The Opossum, Our Only Marsupial



Not everyone likes possums, but they are interesting animals. Possums are about the size of a cat, but have a very short lifespan for a mammal that size, only 1-2 years in the wild. They have 50 teeth, more than any other mammal. Possums have a hairless scaly tail that is prehensile, which means they can use it like an extra limb. I had a bird feeder hanging from a tree branch, and this possum would hang by his tail from the branch to get the suet off the top of the feeder. The brain of a possum is small for its size so they are kind of stupid. The most interesting thing about possums is that the female has a pouch, like the kangaroo and other Australian mammals. The mother possum gives birth after only 2 weeks to as many as 25 embryos. These embryos are about the size of a navy bean but must crawl into the pouch on their own. The first 13 in the pouch find a teat and fasten on to it. The rest of the embryos will die. The babies will remain attached to the teat for about 2 months and will come out of the pouch at 2 ½ months. The babies ride on the mother's back or hold on to her tail until they are on their own at 5 months. Possums can't run very fast so they are vulnerable to predators. Sometimes they just face their enemy and hiss. This doesn't work very well when they are in the road and the enemy is a car! Another defense is to play "possum". They go in to a coma-like state. They are stiff, eyes are open, and they look and smell dead. Leave them alone, and they'll recover and waddle off after a short time. Possums are omnivores, which means they eat both plants and animals. They eat a lot of carrion (dead animals) as well as eggs, small animals, corn, fruit and berries. Possums were and still are hunted for their fur and meat. During the Great Depression, people in the country ate a lot of possum. They say it tastes like chicken. One of our old neighbors out here in the country used to catch possums and feed them corn for a while before he ate them. One thing possums really like is cat and dog food, so don't leave any outside at night. Or you may find a possum on your porch!

July 2019

Sunday, July 7 - Pentecost 4

8:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite I
10:30 am Holy Eucharist Rite II

Monday, July 8

10:00 am NO Quilting for Others

Wednesday, July 10

12:15 pm Healing Service
3:30 pm Book Study at Royal Oaks
(final study until Fall)

Sunday, July 14 - Pentecost 5

8:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite I
10:30 am Holy Eucharist Rite II
NO 2ND SUNDAY POTLUCK

Office Hours:

Monday, July 8

Offices Closed - volunteer only
9:00am - 12:00pm

Tuesday - Friday, July 9-12

10:00 am - 4:00 pm

CHURCH STAFF

Interim Rector

Rev. Susan Butler
Organist/Choir Director
Beth Nichols
Parish Administrator
Curry McClurken
Preschool Director
Laura Bock

VESTRY

Adult Formation

Jan Littell
jlittell01012@gmail.com

Children and Youth Formation

Adam Davenport, Co-Chair
adam.jason.davenport@gmail.com
Juli Hayes, Co-Chair
adawgfan@optilink.us

Finance

Jim Halverson
Jim.halverson@regions.com

Jr. Warden

Jan Littell
jlittell01012@gmail.com

Outreach

Adam Davenport, Co-Chair
adam.jason.davenport@gmail.com
Juli Hayes, Co-Chair
adawgfan@optilink.us

Parish Life

Deb Hull
deborahmariehull@gmail.com

Pastoral Care

Sally Little
little.sally1@gmail.com

Property & Grounds

Rick Jackson
ricky.martha.jackson@gmail.com

Sr. Warden

Rick Powell
rpowell_pts@yahoo.com

Stewardship

Rick Powell
rpowell_pts@yahoo.com

Welcoming

Bob Caperton
bob@barrettproperties.com

Worship

Marilyn Lance
lancemarilyn@yahoo.com

We celebrate the lives that make up the
community of St. Mark's Church.

Happy Birthday

July 8-14

Bowen Halverson Twilla Gouffon Rick Wagner
Kelly Harrell Judy Rehberg Tyler Gay
Susan Elrod Deb Hull

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Giving for week ending 6/23/19:

Weekly Giving	\$ 4,137.00
Total Giving for June	\$ 18,768.00
MTD Budgeted for June	\$ 25,000.00
Difference for June	\$ (6,232.00)
YTD Budgeted	\$ 156,250.00
YTD Giving	\$ 141,761.04
YTD Difference	\$ (14,488.96)

Thank you for your generosity and support for the
work of God here at St. Mark's!

Intercessory Prayer List – July 2019

(Parishioners indicated by *)

*Geneva Albertson	David Adams	Debbie	Jeremy Norton
*Joan Anderson	Melvin Adams	David Dinges	Martha Painter
*Walter Arms	Brad Adkins	Edie	Mary Elizabeth Paris
*William Brammer	Kelly Allgood	William Edwards	Randy Perry
*Max Buckner	Chastity Almond	Erica	Steve Plott
*Jon Burchfield	Thad Arms	Janelle Ferguson	Diana Poarch
*Tracey Burke	Debbie Arms Smoot	Phil Gailey	Michelle Pritchett
*Patti and Gary Cole	Bobby Ray Armstrong	Colleen Halverson	Shirley Puckett
*Cathie Cope	Asher	Harrison	Bob Rodric
*Nola Culverson	Lynn Bailey	Mary Haughie	Sarah
*Lisa Dinverno	Jeanne Barnes	Janet Hayes	Mary Schaug
*Melba Greene	Jean Bivens	Tasha Hemphill	Edwina Schwegmann
*Scott Hamlin	David Blackburn	Hyde Family	John Sewell
*Carolyn Hawkins	Mary Blackburn	David Joyner	Mac Starr
*Brenda Hoffmeyer	Brenda	Katherine Kelehear	Laura Stephens
*Jacob Jones	Brian	Beverly Kellett	Terese
*Steve Jordan Family	Alice Brinkley	Aaron Kitchings	Bailey Underwood
*Jan Littell	Maxine Broeker	James Lambert	Christine Williams
*Sandy Martin	Vickie Brookhardt	Austin Lansing	Bradley Wilson
*Norman McCoy	Betty Brown	Becky Lewis	Melanie Wilson
*Kim Miller	Walt Brown	Hannah Locke and family	Jason Yates
*Teresa Noble	Margie Bruner	Beth Long	
*Alice Oosterhoudt	Mary Bucy	Jim Lord	
*Ethel Rutledge	Eva Burchfield	Melinda Lukei	
*John Schwenn	Marita Cantrell	Reese Lukei	
*Bernadette Smith	Ron Cantrell	Ann Lumpkin	
*Pete Smith & Family	Judith Catalano	Minnie Marsh	
*Carol Taylor	Laticia Coney	Steve Masingill	
*Virginia Weaver	Carole Cook	Bridget McClure	
*Roger Williams	Jeri Cotnam	Maryanne McDaniel	
*Terry & Celia Williams	Mary Cox	Michelle	
	Jenny Allen Crawford	Esme Miller	
	Jaye Anne Creswell	Teresa Mitchell	
	Virginia Cross	Riley Mutter	
	Crystal	Charlie Neal	
	David Culverson	Rebekah Nichols	
	Jack Dale	Billy Nimmons	