

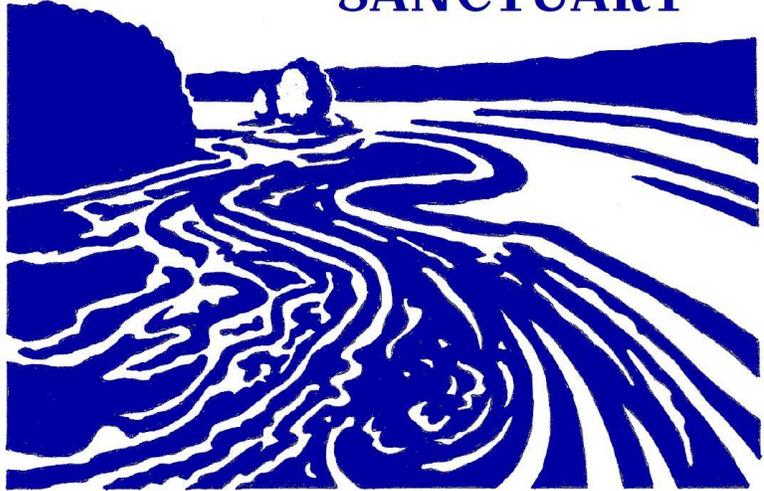
Ebb and Flow

REVERSING FALLS SANCTUARY

*Reversing Falls
Sanctuary*

Newsletter

October 2018



Kaleidoscoping Christianity: A Welcome

Elaine Hewes, a member of the Program Committee here at Reversing Falls, and the one who came up with the idea for this series, opened the first program with these words: Welcome to our series of evenings called “Kaleidoscoping Christianity.” We recognize that this is a rather unusual topic for this community. This community being a beautiful hodge-podge of diverse folks who show up here with some regularity for programs and lectures and concerts and experiences that are very rarely connected to any particular faith tradition. Making this series needful of some explanation as to our intentions in hosting it. With particular care given to explaining what our intentions are **not**.

And the best way I have of doing so is by telling the story of the abbot who stood in front of the monks in his monastery one day, held up an apple, and simply asked, “What’s inside?”

“Fruit,” responded one monk... “The flesh of the apple.”

“Yes, and inside the fruit?” the abbot queried.

“The core,” answered another brother.

“And inside the core?” the abbot pressed further.

“Seeds,” came a voice from the back of the room.

“And inside each seed?” the abbot asked, looking out upon the brothers.

Silence filled the room. Until the abbot said, almost in a whisper...

“Ah... inside each seed is an orchard”.



So what I would like to suggest is that in this series of gatherings we are trying to glimpse the orchard at the heart of a story that has, almost since its beginnings, often been reduced to the skin. To the outside of things, where as in any religious tradition, folks can get fixated on shining, protecting, preserving, organizing, and calcifying the outer layers while completely forgetting what lives and burns and sings at the center. Anyone who has studied world history knows that the Christian Church as an institution has been very good at focusing on “what’s outside,” even to the point of making the “outside things” central to the faith, and in the process marginalizing or silencing those folks who dared go deeper than the skin of the story, those prophets, poets, pastors, priests, mystics and lay people who insisted on going deeper than the skin of the tradition all the way to where things are wilder and more ambiguous and complex and paradoxical and harder to organize and control.

(Indeed there have been these people within the tradition from the very beginning, thank heaven, people who, instead of abandoning the Christian faith have wrestled with the words, images and symbols, deconstructing them and reconstructing them like the pieces of colored glass in a kaleidoscope until they catch a glimpse of something for which the only possible response is “gasp”! Which is by the way, according to my friend Rabbi Darah Lerner, the best name there is for God... *Gasp!*)

Rather, we’d like to open up the possibilities for sharing glimpses we have had of the mystery that lives and sings and burns deep in the heart of the story... And by “we” I mean not only those of us who are “officially” presenting over these six weeks... those of us raised in the Christian tradition, trained in the tradition, and even now practicing the tradition and serving in Christian communities as pastors, priests, professors and poets...

But hopefully any of us, all of us, who have wrestled with the calcified words and symbols and teachings of the Christian story (both within the community of faith and as far away from it as we could get), all the way to that place where the words fall away and the letters fall away and the symbols fall away, and all that’s left is.... *silence*.



In that regard I will also say that our intention is **not** to make propositions about faith or declarations of “right belief” or statements in support of certain ways of seeing “God”. It is rather to speak of the glimpses we have had of the orchard when we have dared wrestle with the tradition to that place of deepest knowing.

Meaning there will be nothing for us to argue about, because of course, while we can always argue with someone's opinion about something, we can't argue with their stories, with their experiences, with the glimpses they have had of what is sometimes called "sacred". We can only listen and hold with reverence all that we will share with one another each evening, trusting that in such listening and such sharing there will come for each of us a turn of the kaleidoscope now and then and perhaps, hopefully, a glimpse of "what's inside."

This is our intention:

And for those of you who left the Christian tradition as soon as you could do so, or for those of you who have never identified with the Christian tradition and wonder just what this series might have to offer you, I would like to read a short response written by Gary Vencill in answer to this exact question posed by someone in the Reversing Falls community this past week. Gary wrote,

This series is an opportunity to hear how 8 area theologians have redefined [deconstructed and reconstructed to use Elaine's description] key Christian concepts that have troubled them and which trouble many others, Christian and non-Christian alike. As in so many other areas of endeavor around here, we are blessed with some remarkable minds, even among local clergy. All eight have had one foot in the church and one foot out of it in their careers.

RFS has tried to be a place where we respect and learn from each other's diverse spiritual journeys. This series is planned to be the first in an opportunity to listen to, learn from, and challenge each other's religious concepts. I especially hope that those who have been wounded by and/or alienated from Christianity will come. I especially hope that those among us who are Buddhists, Jews, who embrace indigenous spirituality, or who are among those who reject all religions, will come. The Program Team has discussed but not nailed down yet a similar series for Buddhism, Judaism and Wabanaki spirituality. I am hoping for Buddhism in the spring and Judaism in the fall.



Your opinions and reactions are among those I particularly want to hear.

Please hear in Gary's response to the question, "What could a series entitled 'Kaleidoscoping Christianity' have to say to me?" Please hear an invitation to overhear eight Christian pastors, priests, professors and poets share their own struggles with the tradition and what they have glimpsed in those struggles. What you hear may surprise you.

And please feel not only welcomed but encouraged to share your insights and impressions and questions. Because truthfully, we are always on the look-out for new metaphors and images and words to put into the kaleidoscope. We're depending upon you to help us break open the skin yet once again and to journey all the way to the orchard... *Gasp!*

And then lastly there is this: If in our sharing and our conversations over these weeks we do not come away with a deeper sense of our connectedness, our inter-relatedness, our dependency upon one another in the living of the fullest life possible, if we do not come away with a deeper sense of our connectedness with the wider world and the exquisite mystery of nature that surrounds and sustains us, if we do not come away with a clearer, surer sense that everyone has a place at the table, then it is all for naught.

And certainly not reflective at all of what lives and burns and sings at the center of what some of us call the Christian story.

[This Sunday, 9/30, Elaine Hewes and Allen Myers will kaleidoscope the word "God."]

Welcome

**Whoever you are, you are welcome here.
Wherever you come from, you are welcome here.
Protestant or Catholic, you are welcome here.
Buddhist, Jew or Muslim, you are welcome here.
And if you come from no religious tradition at all, you are welcome here.
If you are a believer, you are welcome here.
If you are not a believer, you are welcome here.**

**Whatever your sexual orientation or gender expression, you are welcome here.
Whatever your age or ability, you are welcome here.
If you come here often, you are welcome here.
If you have not been here for a long time, you are welcome here.
If you have never been here before, you are welcome here.
We open our hearts to you, and ask only that you
open your hearts to each other.**

Next Climate Presentation

Sunday October 7 at 6:30 p.m. Jeremy Jackson, a leading Climate Scientist and a neighbor will share insights gathered through interviews with citizens and scientists for his best-selling book, *Breakpoint: Reckoning with America's Environmental Crisis*.

In gratitude for the recent illuminating evenings with Michael MacCracken and Keith Mason, and remembering the visit of Kelsey Juliana, here is a second poem by one of the GSA poets read during Juliana's presentation.

EARTH

*She is cold and white and slowly dying
A huddled mass yearning to breathe free
Strapped tightly to a hospital bed.
Buzzing machines are driven into her,
Pumping out her blood
And monitoring her slow breathing.
The lush meadows of her hair are gone,
Leaving empty hollows and bare mountain tops.
People with gloves
And without faces
Cluster around her,
They will not help her,
They cannot look into her eyes.
And they refuse to call her by name.*

*Outside, in the sterile waiting room
People's voices are rising
"Why can't we see her?"
"Why can't we know what's going on?"
"Be quiet," they are told
"We are doing all we can."
Inside, the machines keep pumping up and down.
But we can only take and slash
And burn and cut and scar
For so long.
Soon there will be nothing left
And she will disappear
Leaving us standing
On the crumbling illusion
That we can survive without her.*



by Magnolia Rose Vandiver
seen on the far left of this photo with
Kelsey Juliana and her fellow poets.

Hospice Volunteers are needed.
Training to begin on mid-October.
Contact Lori Johnson at 667-2531 or

www.ljohnson@hospiceofhancock.org

Coming Events at Reversing Falls

Sun. 9/30, 4 p.m. Allen Myers and Elaine Hewes kaleidoscope the word “God.”

Thu. 10/4, 1 p.m. Building team meets with the District Superintendent, the District Committee on Building and Location, and the trustees of the Brooksville United Methodist Church to discuss future building and renovation plans at RFS.

Thu. 10/4 thru. Sun. 10/7, 1 – 4 p.m. Art Exhibit “Being There” open at “Gallery Within” at Reversing Falls Sanctuary

Sun. 10/7, 4 p.m. Women’s Circle

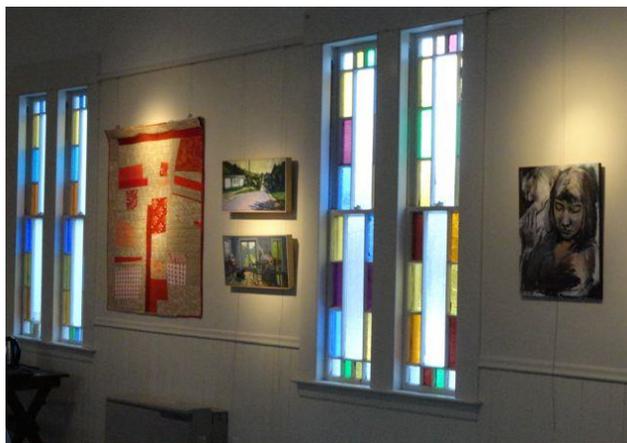
6:30 p.m. Jeremy Jackson — *Breakpoint: Reckoning with America’s Environmental Crisis*

Wed. 10/10, 4:30 p.m. Program Team meets

Thu. 10/11 thru Sun. 10/14, 1-4 p.m. Art Exhibit “Being There” — last opportunity to see it.

Sun. 10/14, 4 p.m. Alice Hildebrand and Dana Douglass kaleidoscope the word “Salvation.”

Fri. 10/19, 4-6 p.m. Art Exhibition Opening — “The Essence of Things” with artists Gail Page and Rob Shetterly



Sun. 10/21, 4 p.m. Anne Ferrara and Gary Vencill kaleidoscope the word “Faithfulness.”

Wed. 10/24, 4 p.m. Board of Directors meets

Thu. 10/25 – Sun. 10/28, 1-4 p.m. Art Exhibit “Through the Kaleidoscope” at Gallery Within

Sun. 10/28, 4 p.m. Cynthia Bourgeault on Teilhard de Chardin and Ecology

Sun. 11/4, 4 p.m. Women’s Circle

6 p.m. Potluck and discussion of Kaleidoscoping Christianity series at home of Elaine and Michael Hewes.

Community Events

Mon. 10/1. 4 -5:30 p.m. “Non-Traditional Funeral Options: Your Choice, Your \$\$,” Blue Hill Library

Fri. Oct. 12, 4:30-5:30 p.m. A Vigil Against the Militarization of Space on Blue Hill bridge

Photo credits: Julie Cleveland, Daksha Bauman, Pat Wheeler,, Anne Ferrara, Pat Wheeler

Information: www.reversingfalls.org