

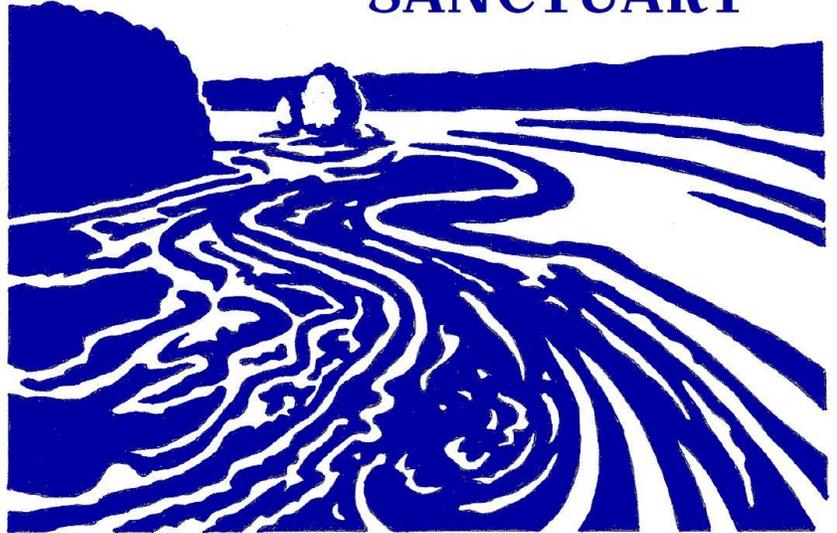
Ebb and Flow

November 2018

*Reversing Falls
Sanctuary*

Newsletter

REVERSING FALLS SANCTUARY



Dear Friends of Reversing Falls Sanctuary,

Last week's killing of eleven worshipers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and of two shoppers at a grocery store in Kentucky capped a week in which pipe bombs were sent to leaders of our country in an assassination attempt. It is hard to imagine the depth of sorrow we would feel had that attempt been even partially successful. These offenders were all, we might note, domestic terrorists. And this after a year with so much to grieve in our country and in the world.

Last Monday at 4 p.m. we held a profoundly moving vigil at RFS to honor the slain. In this issue we will be announcing a new policy with respect to the posting of announcements to our e-list. What will not be addressed is our intention to maintain the flexibility to respond to events in the community, the country or the world that fall outside the guidelines. When there are mass killings at schools or at houses of worship or at workplaces or at nightclubs, when our country acts to destroy the peace of another country, when children are separated from families at our borders, when those targeted belong to communities discriminated against because of race or color or creed or sexual identity, we will want to act and react ourselves or in concert with other organizations.

Every year, in a report to the annual church conference of the Brooksville United Methodist Church, Anne Ferrara writes an account of what we have done during the year at RFS. That account is always worth including in an RFS newsletter so that we can see the full extent of our work together. That account follows here.

“Even as seas rise against shores, another tide is beginning to rise — a tide of outrage against the pillage of the planet, a tide of commitment to justice and human rights, a swelling affirmation of moral responsibility to the future and to Earth’s fullness of life.” From *great tide rising* by Kathleen Dean Moore (Portrait painted by Rob Shetterly in his *Americans Who Tell the Truth* series.)

Our December Advent Spiral is an opportunity to bring the beauty of nature into our Sanctuary, to welcome the many spiritual seekers in our community, and to visually portray how light conquers darkness. It is an actual enactment of a “swelling of moral responsibility to the future and to Earth’s fullness of life.”



January found folks at Reversing Falls Sanctuary once again preparing our Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial celebration. This year, we got to hear the story of a pilgrimage taken by one of our members to the many sites where the “beloved community” in the Civil Rights Movement had labored for justice, suffered for justice, and in many cases, died for justice. It was a beautiful evening of storytelling and music and tears, and it set us up for our own mini-pilgrimages where we are joining with others in our nation and on our Earth to affirm the strength and beauty of diversity among humans and, indeed, among all the natural world.

In February we hosted a film series titled *Uplifting the Spirit*. Also, in February, we hosted a young social justice activist/journalist who reported about her recent trips to Kabul, Afghanistan and to Honduras. A joyous celebration was held on 2/24 when we were honored to have Sherri Mitchell, indigenous rights attorney from the Penobscot Nation, read from her new book, *Sacred Instructions: Indigenous Wisdom for Living Spirit Based Change*.

The theme of this year’s Spring series was *Awakening the Spirit*. For three Sundays, we had the indescribable experience of hearing two community members each week describe from their own lives *Blessings Found in the Ordinary*, *Blessings Found in the Wound* and *Blessings Found in Relationship*. The result was blessings flowing in all directions as we reflected on the insights and wisdom these folks had gleaned from their surprising life journeys.

On Good Friday this year, the labyrinth at RFS became the setting for the Passion of the Earth, a sacred ritual where we acknowledge and mourn 14 ways in which our sacred creation is being scourged and crucified today. Earth Day was another opportunity to honor our beautiful planet home — drumming got us in contact with the heartbeat of Mother Earth.

Many of our programs this year have had Climate Change as their focus. We were honored to co-sponsor several events with Kelsey Juliana, who together with 20 other youth (Our Children's Trust lawsuit), are suing the federal government for depriving them of their constitutional rights to life, liberty and property by denying the science of climate change and allowing the degradation of our planet home. For her visit, we invited our local high school students to write poetry about climate change. Their poems awed us and saddened us profoundly.

We had educational programs featuring Peter Neill, founder and director of the World Ocean Observatory, Mazim Qumsiyeh, founder of the Natural History Museum on Palestine's West Bank, Sarah Buie and Walter Wright, founders of the Council on an Uncertain Human Future, Michael MacCracken, chief scientist of Climate Change Programs for the Washington DC based Climate Institute, Keith Mason, recently retired from the Environmental Protection Agency, and Jeremy Jackson, emeritus professor at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography and senior scientist emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution, who introduced his best selling book, *Breakpoint*. Not only have these experts shared their knowledge with us, they also provided us with the many solutions available to our society to bring about radical change, sooner than later. However, it seems that it is the moral outrage and responsibility that are lacking. We certainly hope and pray that that tide is turning.

The summer was a lovely time for music in the Sanctuary. Reggie Harris, Ellacappella, and Curtis Brand helped to raise the roof with their melodies and raise some needed dough for our well/septic/indoor bathroom project which is well under way. We were also really fortunate to have conversations with Mara Sapon-Shevin, another one of Rob Shetterly's *Americans Who Tell the Truth*; she is an internationally acclaimed educator and proponent of inclusivity in our schools. In August, we also welcomed Joe Perkins from *At Home* who wanted to explain his organization's commitment to keeping the elderly in their own homes as long as possible.



On the first Sunday of each month, 20 to 30 women gather for our Women's Circle which has been meeting now for 8 years. We are a circle of kindness and strength, a circle of support and wild creativity. New members are always welcome.

Our Board of Directors met for a weekend retreat (5/31 – 6/01) with Fred Van Liew, restorative justice practitioner here in Maine. The peacemaking circle that Fred convened helped the board and friends of the board get to know one another better and to clarify the priorities of the board as it guides RFS into the future. One decision taken by the board this year was to donate \$1,000 from our coffers to 6 local organizations we want to support.

Kaleidoscoping Christianity is the title of our Autumn series here at Reversing Falls Sanctuary. As one of our planning members expressed it, “*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. . .*” In our desire to get to what lives and burns and sings at the center of this tradition, we have heard a lecture on natural theology, and we have listened to local pastors/priests/professors wrestle with the words/images of God, Salvation, and Faithfulness. We have been introduced to the work of Teilhard de Chardin as it informs our understanding of ecology. And we have broken bread together while we continued the pondering of these mysteries. Accompanying this series have been two brilliant art exhibits, *Being Here* and *The Essence of Things*. Having the artistic creations of our neighbors present in this sacred space has been inspiring, thought provoking and spiritually uplifting.

And lest we get carried away with questions of the spirit, let us not forget the importance of matter. Our building and grounds team has been busy this year moving us closer to bringing water into Reversing Falls Sanctuary. In fact, the well has been dug, the septic is being prepared, and the kitchen (which will become the bathroom) has been gutted. We are so grateful to the folks who have devoted so much time, effort, and elbow grease to bring these miracles about.

We are an emerging spiritual community whose mission is to build community, care for the Earth and support local artists and musicians. We offer an inclusive and welcoming sacred space where all stories are honored and all spiritual paths are respected.

Respectfully submitted by Anne Ferrara



Publicity Notification Policy

Because requests for publicity notifications have become overwhelming in number, the RFS Board of Directors has adopted the following policy with regard to priorities. Regular notices will go to the RFS e-list for those that fit the following description:

1. RFS sponsored or co-sponsored events at RFS
2. RFS sponsored or co-sponsored events held elsewhere
3. Public events not sponsored by RFS but taking place at RFS

One-time per year notices will go to the RFS e-list for those fitting these descriptions [but will usually continue to be posted to the RFS bulletin board] [This will allow RFS recipients to join other's distribution lists.]:

4. Public events organized by non-profit groups associated with RFS through RFS people

5. Public events organized by non-profit groups associated with RFS through similar philosophical leanings
6. Private non-profit events organized by someone associated with RFS in some way

Announcements fitting the following descriptions will not be sent to the RFS e-list:

7. Profit organizations associated with RFS in some way
8. Profit organizations not associated with RFS
9. Political advocacy for candidates or ballot questions

Notices should include the name and contact info for the person responsible. Flyers should be in PDF format, and one-time notices need to have explicit information on how to subscribe directly. A summary of this policy will be provided to all interested persons whether RFS recipients or those requesting distribution of notices. For further information contact Gary at garyvencill@gmail.com or Ralph at rchapman.cea@gmail.com

Coming Events

Sunday 11/4, 12 noon at Brooksville United Methodist Church in Buck's Harbor, a *vigil for those slain at the Tree of Life Synagogue* and at the grocery store in Kentucky as well as an opportunity to mourn for our country where an assassination attempt against our leaders has just been thwarted.

11/4, 1- 4 p.m. Art Exhibit by Gail Page and Rob Shetterly, "*The Essence of Things*," can be seen at the Gallery Within at Reversing Falls Sanctuary

11/4, 4 p.m. *Women's Circle*

11/4 6 p.m. *Potluck supper to reflect on and discuss the Kaleidoscoping Christianity series* at the home of Mike and Elaine Hewes. To reach the Hewes from Reversing Falls cross the Bagaduce, turn right on 176 at B & G, proceed to the third drive on your right, Oak Hill Lane, and bear right at the fork.

11/10 and 11/11, 1-4 p.m. Gallery open to view "*The Essence of Things*."

11/17, 1-4 p.m. Gallery open to view "*The Essence of Things*."

11/18, 4 p.m. "*The Essence of Things*" will close with a conversation with artists Gail Page and Rob Shetterly..

11/24, 4 p.m. Art Exhibition opening, "*The Magic of Winter*," Annie Poole and Sally Cooper

12/2, 4 p.m. *Women's Circle*

12/16, 4 p.m. *Annual Advent Spiral*

Credits: Snowflake decoration by Daksha Baumann

Photo of women on the steps by Pat Wheeler

Photos of snowflake and stained-glass windows by Julie Cleveland

Information: www.reversingfalls.org