



# RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY PARISH

## Land Stewardship Committee

### “FRILUFTSLIV”

#### SAY WHAT?

It is Norwegian for living outdoors. Playing outdoors. Praying outdoors. There are many spiritual benefits of spending time outdoors. Many authors have documented the clear connection between spending time in nature and the physical, psychological, and spiritual benefits of reduced stress and clearer thinking. There are also practical ways that virtually anyone can discover these benefits on a daily basis, even if they may not live far out in the country. Perhaps at their parish?



While there is much documentation about the physiological benefits of spending time in nature, and also documentation of the benefits of Eastern meditation, there seems to be a lack of empirical studies in the area of spiritual benefits derived from Christian practices in nature. It would be fascinating to conduct more research and study in this connection and benefits. In what ways could corporate worship experiences draw from the example of Christ’s teaching in nature? Would there be advantages in incorporating more object lessons into Christian teaching? How can the Christian religion be grounded more thoroughly in a study of nature and science? In what ways can Christians embrace Biblical meditation and prayer, especially outdoors in nature, or by using a natural setting in an urban environment, without falling pray to the deceptions of Eastern meditation and mystical practices?

Creation Spirituality considers itself a “green” theology, emphasizing a holy relationship between humanity and nature—a concept quite at peace with the Native Americans. Accordingly, the sacredness of nature is considered a sacrament, and creation is considered an expression of God and the “Cosmic Christ”. This approach was endorsed by eco-theologian Thomas Berry among others.

WE ARE ALL VISITORS TO THIS TIME, THIS PLACE. ... OUR PURPOSE HERE IS TO OBSERVE, TO LEARN, TO GROW, TO LOVE... AND THEN WE RETURN HOME

(Australian Aboriginal Proverb)

### Australian Aboriginal Proverb

RESURRECTION



## AND?

What has this to do with Resurrection University Parish? Everything!

The parish is on the brink of beginning an expansion which can be a continuation of that which was, except larger. Or, it can be a new look, not only on building design, utilization, and purpose but more—a new interpretation of what the Christian missions is called to be. An integration if you will of the whole people of God. Parishioners, students, vacationers. Cognizant of the axiom, (good in law as well as religion), *Antiquity Does Not Guarantee Authenticity*, the parish—people of Resurrection University Parish—stand at the front door of this adventure with a potpourri of hopes and dream ranging from what was, to what is, and what can be.

Adventure, now there is a splendid term. It is drawn from Latin (ad venturi) where Ad refers to the preposition before, and venturi is drawn from the nautical term coming or going before the wind. In a magnificent display of the call of the precepts of Vatican Council II that Church should be a teaching group as well as a learning group the parish has been given every opportunity to attend, listen, speak, debate, and pray for wisdom and guidance and contribution to the parish expansion. There is no doubt that the parish roster has an ample population of parishioners that pursue and integrate many disciplines with field experience in a multitude of life circumstances. The call for participation is not just a call for tithing, but instead a commendable call for contribution of Time, Talent, and Wealth. And that requires speaking as well as listening.

The very concept of parish has matured from the original table side gatherings, to political boundaries, to geographical locations meant to facilitate the orderly flow of sacraments, theology, and accountable patrimony. Now, parish is more than a boundary, it speaks of a people who, not a place where. It is laudable that the pastor has encouraged a leadership group that displays a sense of proportion and accountability as well as reception to challenging new ideas from all of the people of God. That takes us to several diverse missions, offices, and committees all of which represent many opportunities—obstacles. It is said that the Chinese language deals with that duality in a magnificent way. Opportunity and obstacle have identical spelling but the difference hangs on the voice inflection of the pronunciation. That being the case, one has to be very careful how he or she pronounces parish expansion to assure that it begins and ends as opportunity and not obstacle.

Cases in point is the Archdiocese of Miami where one parish development ended up in several million dollar overrun as well as several years delay because the powers to be thought an Italian architect that lived 200 miles distant from the construction site would be a fabulous, albeit expensive, designer of a new church. The point? Very simple. The many diverse missions within Resurrection University Parish merge into the singular aspect of parish. Yet each has diverse goals that are unified under the direction of the pastor and parish committees. Two of them are outside, so to speak, and not necessarily all that visible—Creation Care and Land Stewardship. Will they be let inside?

# SPEAKING TO THE ISSUE

Friluftsliv, as described previously, speaks to what in American is better known as eco-spirituality. In what ways could corporate worship experiences draw from the example of Christ's teaching in nature? That is the easy part. Would there be advantages in incorporating more object lessons into Christian teaching? That is where the debate centers. Maybe it is not just coincidence that 80% of the parables of Scripture speak off or are drawn from nature.

The building committee can pour concrete, cut down trees, scatter grass seed, re-rig sprinkler systems, and all the multitude of designs and implementations consistent with engineering but experience has shown few examples of effective as well as pious results in church design and constructions. Christian religion should be grounded more thoroughly in a study of nature and science. When Scripture speaks of Christ withdrawing to pray it never seems to mention he went to the temple. It speaks of him going to the wilderness, or gardens, or out into the expanse of water. Similarly St. Francis preached to the sparrows and St. Ignatius fell down in a field of flowers covering his ears with his hand crying out that he was being deafened by the voice of God.

The pressing question from the two parish nature oriented committees has to be more than a vegetable garden, guest speakers, and electricity saving. They should ask, in what ways can Christians of Resurrection University Parish embrace Biblical meditation and prayer, especially outdoors in nature, or by using a natural setting in an urban environment.

Creation Spirituality considers itself a "green" theology, emphasizing a holy relationship between humanity and nature. Accordingly, the sacredness of nature is considered a sacrament, and creation is considered an expression of God and the "Cosmic Christ". The voices that make these inquiries need a listening ear not a referral to a National Park 90 miles away or a beaver habitat at the east edge of Bozeman. These committees need the involvement and membership of the parish-people resident in the area or students from Montana State University.

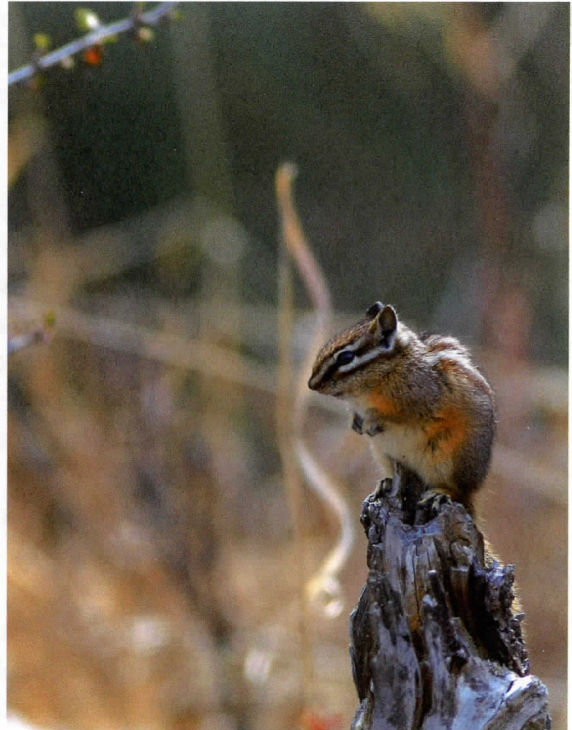
There should be more to pouring concrete and planting trees than just satisfying building codes. These works should all unify with the pastor's homilies, the Kitchen Committee meals, and the sum of all the parish ministries, pointing to the Chief Architect—The Old Master Painter From The Far-Away Hills.



## Critters of Resurrection Parish



Mourning Dove, a quiet gentle creature. A game bird that was in decline but now the numbers are increasing. They can often be seen on telephone wires.



Least Chipmunk  
Quick movements, more often seen in the back garden area offending the Creation Care Committee by eating the fruit of the earth!

**As always, commentary on Green Leaf is gratefully accepted and will receive replies. The web site has been giving us fits, but we believe the problem is now solved to service contacts. The web address is [hoechoka.com](http://hoechoka.com) (ending period omitted to avoid confusion) All lower case. The site can also be reached under the ministry connect on the Parish web page. Drop in, say "howdy".**

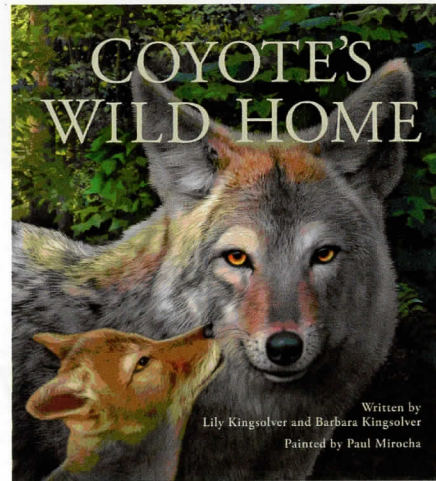
# NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

In A New Book, Barbara Kingsolver and Daughter Lily teach children empathy for wildlife.

Barbara and Lily Kingsolver discuss 'Coyote's Wild Home', family publishing, and the importance of balance in wild places like Greater Yellowstone.

Coyote's Wild Home was published November 28, 2023 and is a children's book that takes readers through a day in the woods with a young girl and her grandfather, along with a coyote pup and his Auntie. Woven through the story and illustrations are bits of information about what a coyote eats, a conversation about predators and prey, and hints at coyotes' diminishing habitat, all topics poignant in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Paintings by Paul Mirocha reinforce the Kingsolvers' goal of being accurate in the flora and fauna depicted in the book while also letting them create a love letter to Appalachia. (For more details see [mojo@mountainjournal.org](mailto:mojo@mountainjournal.org))



Lily is working on a master's degree in environmental and informal science at the Florida Institute of Technology.

This charming book is a perfect gift for the youngsters of the parish and serves as a welcome, instructive, introduction to the ways of God's creation. It couples to religious education like a red caboose--somewhat distant from the engine but a critical part of the whole.

Reading age 6-9 Length 32 pages  
Grade Level 1-2

**The Land Stewardship Committee of Resurrection Parish will have 8 volumes available for parishioners of RUCP (one per person) at **NO COST**. Place your order at [hoechoka.com](http://hoechoka.com) or contact Paul Gore at 406-587-2001. Please, parishioners only.**





***SPRINGTIME IN THE ROCKIES***

**Please Join Us for a  
JOYFUL CELEBRATION**

**We Are So Very GRATEFUL For You !**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 19. MASS WILL BE AT 5 P.M.,  
WITH A RECEPTION TO FOLLOW.**

**MUSIC, DELICIOUS FOOD AND DRINKS**

**Please RSVP to Kathleen at 720-291-8904 or [kjwetz@gmail.com](mailto:kjwetz@gmail.com)**

**by April 15, 2024**