

The Story of 2020
with a look into 2021



INTHECORACLE.ORG

Coracle is a community striving together **to inspire and enable people to be the presence of God in the brokenness of the world through Spiritual Formation for Kingdom Action.** We are grateful for the talent, dedication, and generosity of this community, and we look forward to the ways in which the Coracle team will continue to grow in 2021.

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8 Where we're headed next

Dear friends and fellow-pilgrims,

Coracle had great plans for 2020. And then Covid hit. And greater things have happened than we could have ever planned! At the end of this most unusual year, **we are grateful to God for the great things he has done and grateful to you for making it possible.**

In many ways, for all the real challenges this season has presented, it has also created tremendous opportunities. These ministry opportunities emerged in large part because of discernment—listening for the voice of God— and then being willing to do things we'd never been willing to do before or even considered. Because we could not see the future clearly, we needed guidance, we needed to listen, to discern. **So we listened and discerned, and God guided.** We feel like we've been led each step of the way and have experienced more ministry and growth than ever before, precisely because our imagination is no longer limited by what can be done in person.

You'll see in the following pages evidence of this growth, and it's an exciting story!

I'm particularly grateful (and so proud of our staff!) for how we responded quickly and strongly to the three great challenges of 2020— first the pandemic, then the season of racial reckoning, and then the election. Coracle found itself oddly prepared and well-positioned to offer true help in each of these cases. Our orientation has constantly been, *"How can we help people navigate this? How can we help people stay connected to God in this?"* Somehow, we found many looking to us for substantive help, guidance, and encouragement, and **by God's grace we've been able to minister to literally thousands of people over the course of the year, far more than ever before.** One person told us, "There is comfort in just knowing Coracle exists," and another has found strength in "just knowing that you're there." We are discovering that we have created unique spaces and a true expression of **"integrating Christianity,"** which is so needed in such divided times, and we'll keep on doing it, God-willing and with your help.

We remain as committed as ever to Coracle's motto, **"Spiritual Formation for Kingdom Action."** In the following pages you'll see that expressed through our **actions and engagement**, doing deep work for **racial healing**, providing **soul care and companionship**, offering **hospitality and creating spaces**, and **enabling and equipping** many to offer their unique gifts and vocations to bring God's kingdom further into our often beautiful but all-too-broken world.



Thank you for being a part of this story and a part of this journey, for making it happen through your prayers, support, partnership and participation. **With God all things are possible, and God is making this work possible through you!** We're so very grateful for the many who have been really helped in a really challenging year, and also those who support this work, like you. As has often been said throughout the pandemic, **"We're in it together,"** and that's true from us to you, and God is with us all!

Handwritten signature of Erin Kelly

CORACLE GOES ONLINE

In a matter of days, we shifted from 100% in-person gatherings to 100% online gatherings, opening up many new possibilities for ministry we had never imagined.

SINCE
MARCH

91

Digital Gatherings

13

Virtual Retreats

>2K

Online Participants

Our year was marked by **3 Major Initiatives**— timely and redemptive responses to the areas of deep pain and brokenness we faced this year as a nation.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION DURING A PANDEMIC

CORACLE

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, we launched a series of articles, video devotionals, and our first "**Digital Soundings Seminars**" to help people remain anchored to a loving God in the midst of grief, anxiety, and uncertainty.

We also focused on making spaces for real human connection (even mediated through screens) through a series of "**Conversations from Corhaven**" and through our first ever fully-online retreat, "**Christian Community for Transformation**."

RESOURCES FOR RACIAL HEALING & JUSTICE

CORACLE

In response to America's summer of racial reckoning, we felt led to make space for folks to listen, learn, and lament in the face of blatant injustices. Our Juneteenth "**Lament for Racial Injustice**" brought together 19 different ministries and **over 500 participants** to mourn and pray for the soul of our nation.

Bill also wrote "**An Open Letter to White Christians**," which so far has reached at least **10,000 people** across the web. We hosted several important conversations around racial issues in America and offered several helpful **Soundings Seminars** on this topic.

CORACLE PRESENTS

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP & THE 2020 ELECTION

In response to an unusually fractious election season, we developed a robust set of offerings and resources, all oriented towards keeping Jesus on the throne of our lives and **helping us think and live Christianly**, no matter where we fall on the political spectrum.

Through 3 **Soundings Seminars** and our "**Questions that Matter**" series, we made much-needed space for honest conversation about thorny subjects. Bill also wrote "**How Can Christian Think About This Election**," which has reached at least **4,000 people**.



To view our free resource collections from these initiatives, simply scan the code with your phone's camera and tap the link that appears!

"SFG has been a true lifeline and anchor during this season." -Pastor

"I have not felt 'at a distance' from people or from God because of these opportunities."

"Coracle has done far more than I would have imagined was possible back in mid-March when we were shut-down and we could only meet through virtual programs."

SPACE for GOD

Guided Encounters with God,
New Spiritual Practices

Every Tuesday morning this fall, we have gathered online to make "Space for God" by encountering ancient and modern spiritual practices and reflections on Scripture, including:

**- Lectio Divina - Petitionary Prayer - Celtic Prayer -
Prayer of Examen - Visio Divina - and More!**

These times have been such a blessing that we plan to continue this rhythm into 2021!

BOOK & FILM CLUB 2020

Under the Unpredictable Plant

Eugene Peterson

Jesus and the Disinherited

Howard Thurman

Diary of a Country Priest

Georges Bernanos

Liturgy of the Ordinary

Tish Harrison Warren

Orthodoxy

G.K. Chesterton

12 Years a Slave

The Two Popes

Harriet

*The Last Black Man in
San Francisco*

Lincoln

"It's always good to be connected with the Coracle Community, which nourishes me spiritually in ways that complement my church involvement and deepens my connection to Jesus and his work in the world."

Speaking & Media

Another unexpected blessing of this season was our Staff's increased availability to speak to ministry groups, broadcasts, and publications from across the country, often without needing to travel!



Cornerstone
Trust
Grace in 30
THE FALLS
CHURCH
ANGLICAN

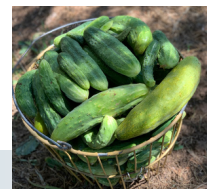
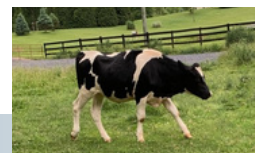


THEOLOGICAL HORIZONS



ENGAGEMENT

In addition to our Online Initiatives (see pgs 2-3), we have sought to redemptively engage the suffering generated by Covid-19 through Generosity. The **Coracle Benevolence Fund** raised and distributed nearly **\$30,000** to people severely impacted in the Shenandoah Valley and Fairfax County. These funds went directly to **1) formerly incarcerated individuals, 2) immigrant families, 3) families on the verge of homelessness, and 4) those who are already unhoused.** We also raised over **\$10,000** for Covid relief in **Guatemala** in December. From our Creation Care efforts at **Corhaven**, we were able to donate over **300 lbs of fresh produce, 1 cow, and 2 hogs** to feed those in need locally.



ENABLING

We have continued to use our online platform to enable others to pursue their God-given vocations. Our community of **Spiritual Directors and Coracle Associates** has continued to thrive, many offering their gifts and talents much more widely through online short courses, retreats, and "Space for God" devotionals. **Common Good Things**, our "business as ministry" venture, has continued to make, harvest, and pickle a variety of wonderful products for sale on our **new online store!**



SOUL CARE & COMPANIONSHIP

Community as we knew it had to be completely rethought this year, and we saw a significant increase in demand for our soul care and spiritual companionship offerings. Our community of **Spiritual Directors** has grown to **27** wonderful men and women serving over **270 directees** this year across **3 Continents!** The **Coracle Community** has continued gathering monthly over Zoom and has even branched into a second gathering on the West Coast using the same meeting structure.

"It has been great staying connected to the Coracle Community during these most unusual times and seeing how the Lord is working in and through others."

RACIAL HEALING

The need for racial healing in our country has arisen mightily in the public consciousness, and we have been able to draw upon our deep experience in and passion for this work to bless and guide many. Our **Juneteenth "Lament for Racial Injustice"** drew over 500 online participants with many partners. The **Corhaven Graveyard** has continued its important work, **hosting over 150 people** for Covid-appropriate tours and several Community Work Days. The **Repentance Project** has also had a big year. We had thousands of people participate in **"An American Lent"** during the Lent season and then saw another surge of participation in **"An American Lament"** over the summer, including 3,000 new page views.

"I've been going through An American Lament, and it's nothing short of spectacular. I've recommended it to countless people, and I'm so grateful for such a rich resource."



"The land always speaks to us if we listen. This land both broke and healed my heart."

EQUIPPING

In addition to the many powerful spiritual formation resources we were able to develop and offer this year, we were also able to continue the Coracle Fellowship Spiritual Formation Program. **The Coracle Fellowship at Corhaven** took a dramatically different form (with many retreats shifting online), and still this class of **25 Fellows** showed up, and again God showed up powerfully. *What was not ideal still was transformative.* After a very successful Baltimore **Pastor's lunch** in February, the **Coracle Fellowship in Baltimore** successfully launched a hybrid in-person and online program in September, with a class of **60 Fellows from 24 different churches** in the area!

"Thanks to the Coracle Fellowship, we have a much greater vision for what Jesus invites us into."



HOSPITALITY

Corhaven became a critically important place for retreat for **over 140 people** seeking a break from lockdowns and quarantines, people needing to spend time with God away from the city and to find strength and solace in such a difficult season. When Corhaven was able to reopen after the initial lockdown, a steady stream of people began coming, one at a time, as well as groups who were camping, and we were glad to provide a place of shelter for them. *It seemed that all those who came encountered God in particularly powerful ways this year.* We were also able to offer a wedding Covid-style!

"I could hardly imagine a more perfect time with God. I see people coming alive to the truth that Jesus is ALWAYS beside them when they come here."



FACTS & FIGURES

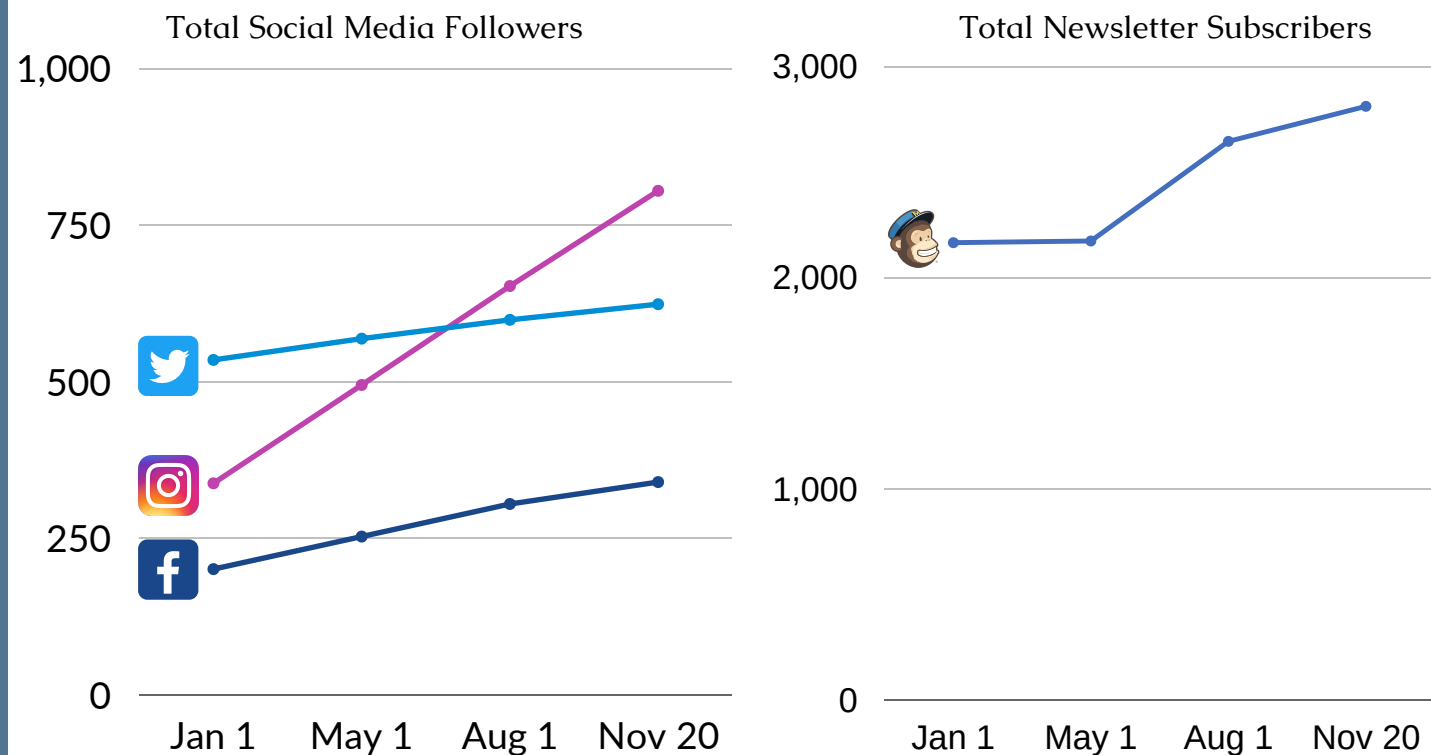
2020 saw many more people finding and engaging with our offerings and resources.

New Followers & Subscribers across All Platforms

1500+

Total Website Visits

48K



Over **3,200** people per month visited our website in 2020, an increase of **73%** from 2019.

We also experienced a very encouraging and humbling **expansion of our support base.**

The # of people joining us as monthly "Sustaining Partners"

DOUBLED

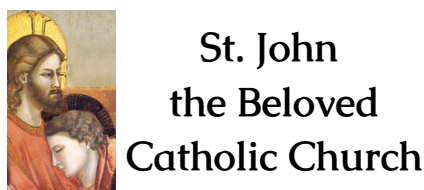
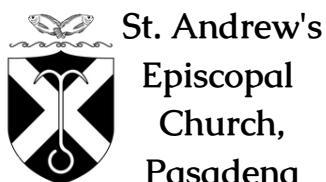
250

People joined us as 1st-time donors

Always far more significant than the money is the energy, confidence, and sense of stewardship that comes from knowing that we have so many faithful fellow-pilgrims on this journey with us!

It was a true honor to be able to **partner with dozens of amazing organizations, churches, and other ministries** over the course of this year, to bring our vital and formative resources and offerings to wider audiences.

28
2020 Event Partners



LITTLE LIGHTS



THEOLOGICAL HORIZONS



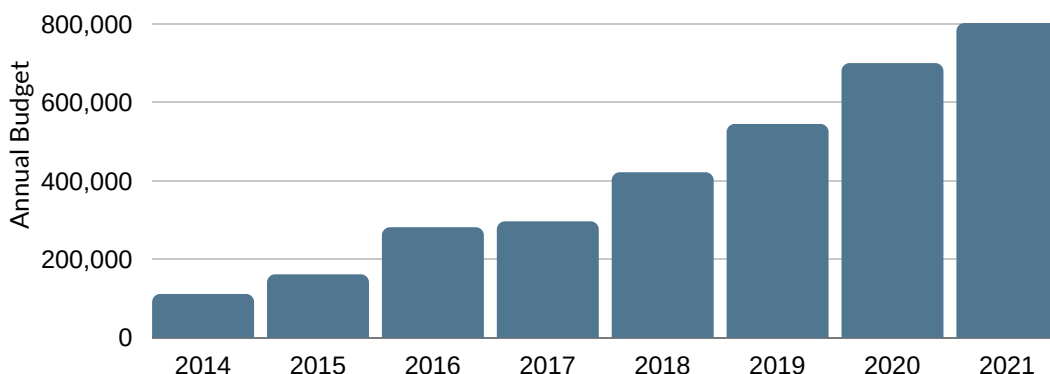
INTO 2021

Next year promises more challenges and more opportunities. We're excited to meet them and harness them to the glory of God! Of course our major programs you've read about will continue, and we're looking forward to substantively **restarting global and domestic pilgrimages**, while working more tangibly with our international partners in the meantime.

Here are some of the things I'm particularly excited about coming in the new year:

- In January, we will launch a **fully online version of the Coracle Fellowship Program**. We already have people signed up from Oregon to Paris to Texas to Toronto!
- We will significantly **increase our virtual offerings** including Soundings Seminars, devotional opportunities, short video reflections, and hosting critical conversations. Through this we hope to add substantially to our **growing library of resources** on different topics that we hope will be widely available and helpful for many and for years to come.
- This past August, in reaction to the tremendous response we received in our work to address America's racial wound, the Coracle board unanimously voted "*to articulate, affirm, and increase our commitment to racial healing and justice and devote specific and increased attention and resources towards these efforts.*" Therefore in 2021, we will approach this work much more strategically, with a **full suite of coherent program initiatives and opportunities** for learning and engagement for the sake of, well, healing.
- We are planning to add an **outdoor pavilion** and a very special "**chapel**" to the Corhaven Graveyard, as well as to celebrate the **5th year anniversary** of its dedication.
- In the fall, we hope to launch our **2025 Vision**, responding to how we have discerned that God is leading us for the next few years to make his ministry through Coracle much more available to many more people and in many more places.
- To keep up with this growth and opportunity and the needs we see, in 2021, Lord willing, we will be **adding several more full-time and part-time staff**.
- And, because our lives and this work leads many of us to encounter so much brokenness, this coming year we will be providing many more **opportunities to encounter Beauty**, through the arts, through creation, and through creating spaces as Covid allows.

Finances and an Invitation

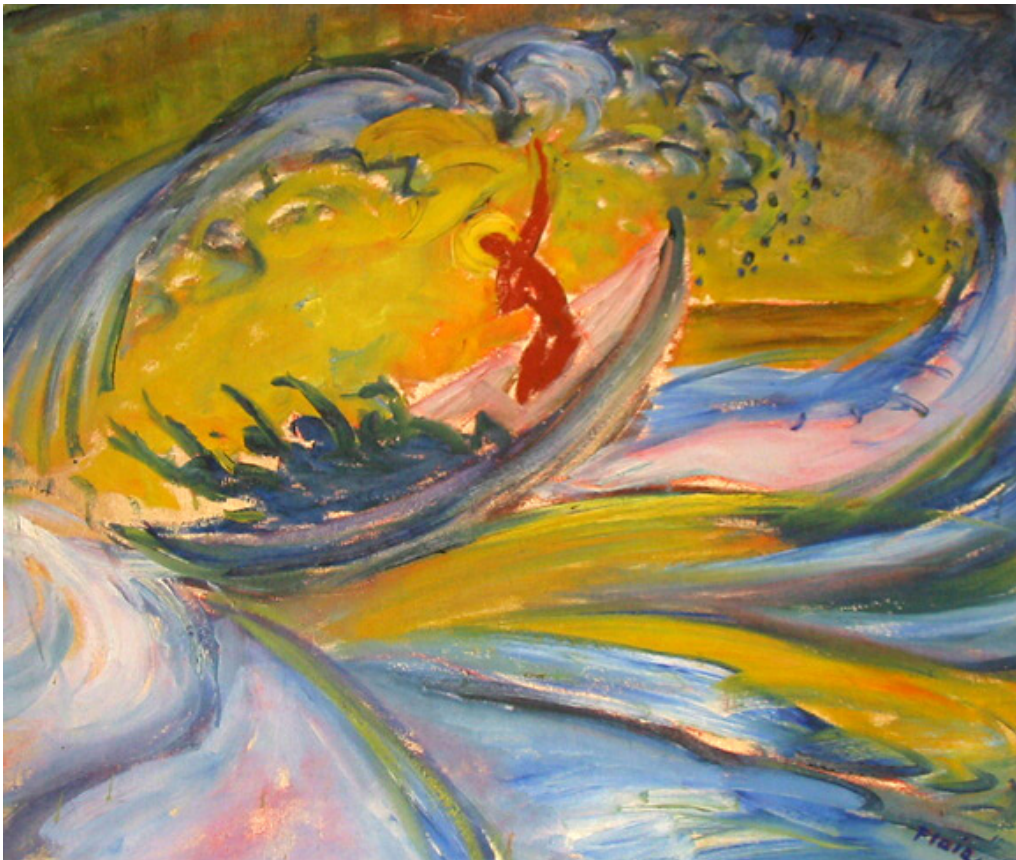


Even through Covid, God has been faithful and you've been so generous with your prayers and financial support. **Thank you!**

You can see that with all that is coming up, we're going to need your prayers and financial help as much, even more, than ever. This past year I've been **so grateful** for your support that has enabled me to work full-time for Coracle for the first time, and I've been so grateful that you've enabled Coracle to respond so strongly and bless so many in this profoundly difficult year of so much crisis. You've done this. **Thank you!**

Looking ahead, **would you consider how you can financially support the work of Coracle to help and bless even more people in another challenging year that is surely coming?** And yes, please keep praying for us, perhaps even joining our prayer team. Information about how to give and how to pray with us is on the back cover. **Thank you.**

So much of what we'll offer in 2021 will be virtual, so please join us, wherever you are. "Coracle" is in fact just an Irish word for a boat, and as this boat gets bigger, **we'd love to have you in it to join us in the adventure that God has us on.** It's a season of heavy winds and big waves, and Jesus is with us in the boat, just like he was 2000 years ago on the Sea of Galilee! And just like then, he isn't worried. Neither are we, because Jesus is with us. So onward and forward and higher and deeper and farther!



"Jesus with the Disciples in the Storm" by Waldemar Flaig, 1932

On the journey,



2020 has been a year of storms! And yet storms do not last forever.

Take a few minutes to reflect with this painting...

How does it speak to your life? What might God be saying to you through it?





A true 2020 Staff Photo!

(Not pictured: Wanda Bickers, Erin Chartier)



@inthecoracle
@commongoodthings
@corhavengraveyard



@inthecoracle
@repentanceproj
@corhavengraves



@inthecoracle

Coracle exists to inspire and enable people to be the presence of God in the brokenness of the world through Spiritual Formation *for Kingdom Action*

To join our Prayer Team, please email communications@inthecoracle.org

We cherish your presence with us on this journey with God, together!

To Donate online, please visit:
www.inthecoracle.org/support
or simply **scan this code with your phone's camera and tap the link:**



Checks can be made payable to **"Coracle"** and can be sent to:
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Quicksburg, VA 22847