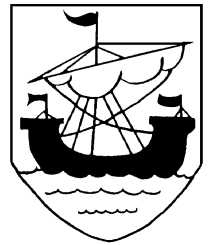


Canterbury Tales



The Newsletter of St. Anselm's Church, Lafayette, California

September, 2021

From The Rector

Covid Reflections

My daughter moved to New York two weeks ago and promptly contracted Covid. Right before Kate was infected, my Texas-based brother-in-law got it, and shortly thereafter Amy, my sister got it too. Yes, they all had been vaccinated, and fortunately none of them have had severe cases.

When I go to the dog park, we dog owners invariably talk about Covid. We rarely have info to share that is news to anyone else because we all are watching this so closely. And Covid news is outdated quicker than a Tik Tok pet video.

So what can your priest offer to you about Covid in a church newsletter that you might read a week after I write it? Hopefully something in response to the question many of us, if we are not asking, we are wondering beneath our 'just-trying-to-get-through-it.'

The question is: Where is God in all of this?

Loaded question- no actually- that question is a dud. Because, that it is not the question being asked. In fact, not a lot of questions are being asked. But a lot of judgements are being passed.

A friend of mine who lives in Northern California has a 14-year-old son. His son won't tell his friends that he has been vaccinated lest they call him a wimp. How did not getting vaccinated become a matter of peer pressure and a badge of honor?

It is important for you and me to ask ourselves that 'dud' question. Because it can become very easy to get drawn into the new normal where adults squabble like adolescents. Our souls get infected and we forget that we still have access to the still, quiet place within. Just like everybody else.

There are those of us in the United States who would characterize our nation as first and foremost about individual freedom. We have told ourselves for generations that this land of the free and the brave will guarantee anyone who wants to work hard the opportunity to succeed. Our own government, just like the British Empire against which we rebelled, some will say can be the greatest threat to our freedom, to that promise.

I am not writing today about the history of those rights that were ignored as Manifest Destiny spread across our continent. But, as a student of the Bible who is bringing to light some of the root causes of how we identify as Americans and people of faith, I have to acknowledge that the narrow concept of 'promised land' in the Bible looks very similar and plagues the Middle East to this day. Just as a limited view of individual freedom is hurting our nation.

No, I want to go back further in the Book, to a time when an itinerant tribe

(Continued on page 5)

Anselm's Angels

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

~ Winston Churchill

A big thank you to the special people who made returning to in-person services safe and successful:

Chris Young for his tireless work as our official cameraman and Zoom expert and to **Jon Martin** and **Shanda Young** for shadowing Chris to learn the system and agreeing to cover when he takes well-deserved vacation time.

Sylvia Williams and **Sally Fischer** and the members of the **Altar Guild** for their work to make sure the sanctuary is clean and safe. Special thanks to **Laura Ho**, **Sara Swimmer** and **Margaret Nicholas** for our lovely floral arrangements.

A big thank you to **Judy Peak** for juggling the schedules for our in-person LEMs and lectors on a weekly basis. A special thank you to the volunteers who have served in these ministries.

Sara Nelson for implementing new guidelines for our courtyard coffee hours and securing volunteer hosts — and a big thank you to the volunteers who have served as our hosts.

Doug Merrill for serving as our weekly usher and ensuring that our contact tracing is accurate.



HURRICANE IDA RELIEF

Episcopal Relief & Development has established a fund to respond to the victims of Hurricane Ida. If you would like to contribute you may write a check to St. Anselm's with the notation "Hurricane Ida Relief" on the memo line or through our Venmo account (instructions below).

COURTYARD COFFEE HOSTS

For those folks who have been attending in-person services, we have been holding coffee hour in the front courtyard. At this time, we are looking for volunteers to host coffee hour during the remaining Sundays this fall. If you are willing to help out, please contact Sara-Anne Nelson at saranelson85@hotmail.com.

DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN...OR MARY, OR FRANK...

The Altar Guild is looking for new members!

Each week the Altar Guild prepares the church for worship, with some members creating the beautiful flower arrangements that grace the altar space, and other members setting up and clearing away the altar items that the clergy use for communion. Members serve once each month, with some special duties during the Christmas, Lenten and Easter seasons. Men, women and kids (accompanied by a parent) are welcome!

If you would like to find out more about this important and rewarding ministry, please contact Sally Fischer (sfischert@yahoo.com) or Sylvia Williams (sw94565@yahoo.com).



Blessing of the Animals

*The annual Blessing of the Animals
will be on October 3rd
during the 9:00 a.m.
in-person / live stream service.*

*All companion animals are
welcome to participate either
in the sanctuary or from home!*

VENMO ACCOUNT INFORMATION

St. Anselm's continues to maintain a Venmo account (search @st-anselms) so you can transfer funds directly to the church via your smart phone. If you would like instructions on how to do so, please email Cathy Witkay at cathy.w@stanselms.ws. For those who are attending in-person services, a locked collection box is available inside the sanctuary. Alternatively, you can always donate by sending a check to the church. The mailing address is: 682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, CA 94549 Thank you!

Canterbury Tales is the monthly newsletter of

St. Anselm's Episcopal Church
682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, CA
Phone: (925) 284-7420

e-mail: cathy.w@stanselms.ws
web site: www.stanselms.us

Editor: Cathy S. Witkay

In- Person & Virtual Sunday Service:
9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

St. Anselm's Staff
The Rev. John Sutton, Rector
The Rev. Naomi Chamberlain-Harris, Deacon
Cathy Witkay, Office Manager

ALTAR FLOWERS

Now that in-person services have resumed, flower donations are now available through the end of 2021. Each week the Altar Guild provides beautiful flowers for our church. By making a \$45 donation you can have these flowers dedicated to the memory of a loved one, in honor of a family member or simply to the glory of God. Please contact Cathy Witkay at cathy.w@stanselms.ws with your selected date(s) and dedication.

The Senior Warden

Straight talk on what lies ahead..

I know we are about to face some uncertain times in the next few months as we all come to accept that Fr. John is retiring which involves a transition to an interim rector for a period of time to support us during our search for a full-time rector.

It's through these uncertain times that we all need to pull together and help each other during this time of transition. I am honored to serve as the Senior Warden during this period and you have my promise that I will do my very best to be of service to ALL at St. Anselm's.

The pandemic and the ever-changing policies that affect our regathering efforts definitely don't help. I am so grateful to Chris and others volunteers for their support in keeping our communication channels open with zoom services and group meetings to support ALL. Communication (aka straight talk) is one of the major ingredients that I believe is truly necessary during this period.

So.. this leads me to communicate with you all on the current status of our interim pastor:

The diocese is providing us with expert guidance on completing the processes necessary in finding, interviewing and selecting an interim pastor. A job description should be complete by the time you read this article. Our goal is to have an interim pastor in place the Sunday following Fr. John's last service as our rector.

Many of you may wonder.. "Why an interim rector?" .."Why don't we just look for a permanent one?".. "Makes no sense to prolong the transition especially during covid,..". -- these were the exact thoughts swirling in my head. Let me do my best to answer them..

"Why an interim rector?" - It's even more important now than ever to have an interim rector help Deacon Naomi, our staff and volunteers keep all the services, programs, groups, church property running as we continue to pivot from in-person to zoom during these uncertain times.

"Why don't we just look for a permanent rector?" - Because this takes time and we will need it. A search committee has not been formed yet. I imagine that along with looking for a new permanent rector, we need to survey our congregation to get input on their vision, hopes, desires for St. Anselm's with the introduction of new leadership.

"Makes no sense to prolong the transition especially during covid.." - Covid definitely has introduced challenges, raised our fears, but it has also introduced some positives. I'm just as concerned about losing parishioners during this time because it's "not Fr. John.." Yes, the interim rector has really big shoes to fill. -- but this is where we need to pull together. As members of our congregation I ask that we do as little or as much to keep our parish together. We will need to lean on our ministries to keep connections going and to help our interim pastor make those connections. As members of St. Anselm's please don't be afraid to reach out to each other. A simple email, phone message to someone you haven't seen online or in church can go a long way.

I'd love to hear from you and my email is eva94549@gmail.com should you want to comment or ask any questions.

Eva Woo

WINTER NIGHTS

God willing and the creek don't rise - or in this case, the Delta variant don't rise, we will be hosting Winter Nights families in Jackson Hall from Monday, October 11th until Monday, October 25th. We will be responsible for meals, etc. for the first week. The second week the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints in San Ramon will take over as co-hosts.

It's not too soon to start lining up volunteers for our many hosting opportunities. Eva Woo Slavitt has been in charge of setting up the volunteer network for many years. She has a lot on her plate right now, so I am helping out.

Unloading and Setting Up: At about 3 PM on Monday, October 11th the Winter Nights truck will arrive with the tents, pillows, blankets, etc. We'll need some volunteers to help unload the truck and set up the tents. Those of us not able to do the heavy lifting can do such things as clean off the high chairs. In the past, we've had Scout troops helping out. If you know of any Scouts who might be willing to volunteer, please let us know. We welcome the Winter Nights families when they start to arrive around 5 PM. We typically order pizza for that first dinner.

Breakfast Team: The breakfast team arrives at 6 AM on Tuesday through Friday and again on the following Monday. We greet the families, set out breakfast supplies such as cereal, milk, fruit, etc., and make coffee. We unload the dishwasher from the night before. We set out the lunches that the families made the night before, and clean up. For a number of years our team consisted of Michael Hollinger and Sally Roberts, Barbara Thornton, and me. I can still be on the team, maybe Barb, but not Michael and Sally. We'll need a couple of volunteers to take their places. If you're willing to do it some of the week, but not all, still let me know.

Dinner Teams: The families come back to Jackson Hall around 5 PM, and we'll be providing dinner Tuesday through Friday. The needed volunteers are as follows:

Greeters: The greeter each night will get there a bit before 5 PM, bringing munchies for the kids and adults and greeting the families as they arrive.

Potluck Hosts: We typically have had someone bring a main course, someone else bring salad and bread, and someone else bring dessert. You can drop off your dish, but I encourage you to stay and eat with the families. It is a very heart-opening experience. If you are willing to bring something, please let Eva or me know and what day you want to do so. The dinner hosts who can stay, set out the supplies for the guests to make sandwiches for the next day's bag lunches, clean up, load the dishwasher, etc.

Those are all the main tasks and roles to be filled. Please let me know if you have questions or are willing. For me, volunteering and getting to know these families has been life-changing. I went from seeing them as the "Other" to seeing them as equals, experiencing their humanity, learning from them, and often coming to love them.

If you want to volunteer or want to learn more, you can get in touch with me, Anne Brown or with Eva Woo Slavitt.

Anne's contact info: annechalfantbrown@gmail.com Cell phone: 925-788-0664

Eva's contact info: eva94549@gmail.com Cell phone: 925-876-9435

* * * * *

P.S. Just heard from Bill Shaw, the Executive Director of Winter Nights, that they are requiring all volunteers to be vaccinated. Hope that doesn't rule any of you out.

From the Rector *(Continued from page 1)*

had little hope of survival.

Our faith traces back to a tribe that wandered through the desert for 40 years. The slim chance they shared required faith and interdependence. Before they could grow, they had to survive. And in order to survive, all understood that sacrifices were necessary for the common good. That outlier who insisted on putting himself first threatened the entire community.

These are things we don't like to talk about. We have rights! We are settled! Wandering in the desert, are you kidding?

But are we really settled? Is the desert of a ventilator in an ICU really that far away?

Did you ever think that there would be a time in your life that your priest would harken back to the Jews in the wilderness as a model for Christian behavior in our time? Doesn't look exactly like progress, does it? But this is the question that matters: Does it look appropriate right now?

For me, we aren't always progressing. History repeats itself; in world events and in scripture.

So that question one more time- where do you think God is in all of this?

And maybe one more:

What would Jesus do?

John+

MICHAEL LANE PRESCHOOL

Hello From Michael Lane Preschool,

We opened our doors on August 25th, and I have been sleeping well ever since! Licensing has allowed us to open to our normal capacity, which is 17 children per day and we are offering a 2, 3, and 5 day program. We are required to wear masks in the classroom, and our fully vaccinated staff is still masked the whole day - but breaks outside are sure lovely! We have also brought back our "Lunch Bunch" program, which allows the children to stay from 12-1 PM and bring their lunch to eat with their friends (and teachers) outside. I loved it as a parent of the school, because my son came home fed and ready for his nap!

On our staff this year Danielle Mallari, Rebecca MacDonald, and Kim Olson are all returning to give us a great range of ages to brighten young minds. Julia McCloud will be coming in for Music classes again, which will be held in the garden 3 times a month.

We have started the year learning all of the different rules, understanding that it's hard when Mom and Dad go away but that they always come back, and learning more about our bodies. I'm looking forward to another great year in preschool, as my 2nd year as the Director.

Thank you for your interest and support,

Holly Higgins
Director

SCHOOL FOR DEACONS FOCUS HAS EVOLVED TOWARD SOCIAL MINISTRY

In the past several decades Episcopal deacons have increasingly focused more attention on social ministry in their communities rather than traditional duties at the church altar.

Few have had a closer view of the ministry's evolution than Sister Pamela Clare Magers of the Community of St. Francis, who has worked at the School for Deacons in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1982 and started teaching a course on "contemporary social issues" in 1984. Prior to the introduction of that course, the curriculum for the school focused on the educational topics required of priests, and the liturgical role of deacons serving at the altar.

But the early to mid-1980s saw a shift toward "practical" issues such as visiting patients at nursing homes, helping people with addictions, and prison ministry. The dean of the school felt that Sr. Pamela's background as a Franciscan, as well as her PhD in Anthropology, would add significantly to the postulants' growth. After several years, study of social ministry became a requirement for all students at the school.

"The student body of the School for Deacons began to change in the mid-1990s," recalled Sr. Pamela. "Students came into the social ministry class already convinced that social ministry was part of their calling. My job was to help them see that they could indeed do social ministry as a deacon, but the unique role of the deacon was to facilitate social ministry for the rest of the church, especially the laity. That means advocating, preaching, teaching, nagging, nurturing, supporting, as well as modeling."

Second-year students must complete two semesters on leadership in social ministry. "The first semester deals with social issues that challenge society and how the church is/isn't/could be involved with meeting the challenge," Sr. Pamela said. "The second semester deals with social ministry in the parish—in other words, getting the congregation more involved with social ministry opportunities in their local community."

While she does not use formal textbooks that deal specifically with how to become a deacon, Sr. Pamela assigns readings from several books by such notable authors as the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, Marlene Wilson, the Rev. Eric Law, and Robert Lupton.

Another book, *Community Ministry*, by Carl S. Dudley, forms the basis for a congregational analysis the students conduct of their own congregations.

"It is a very contextual assignment," Sr. Pamela said. "The students look at church history, the identity of the congregation, the social context of the neighborhood, who is 'The Other' for that congregation, and the story of social ministry in the past and present with an eye to the future development and nurture of social ministry in the congregation."

Her background as a Franciscan heavily influences her teaching.

"The Community of St. Francis (CSF) consists of the Franciscan Sisters, who are part of the Society of St. Francis (SSF), an international religious order in the Anglican Communion. The Brothers SSF, the Third Order TSSF, and the Poor Clares (in England) make up the other parts. CSF began in England in 1905 and is the oldest of the components of SSF," Sr. Pamela noted.

Beyond her teaching for the School for Deacons, Sr. Pamela works extensively with people in need in several San Francisco neighborhoods.

"My own ministries have been mainly with the Latino immigrant community (for 25 years), then with the Care Through Touch Institute (for 17 years), which provides therapeutic massage for poor, homeless, and marginalized people at various social service agencies in the Tenderloin, South of Market and the Mission."

Sr. Pamela added, "The Franciscan Charism has a focus on poor, sick and marginalized folks and sees the connection between how we treat one another in society and how we treat the earth and its creatures. For Francis, the love of God was foremost, and this love extended to all people, indeed all creatures, whom Francis considered to be his brothers and sisters."

To learn more about the curriculum at the School for Deacons, see the school's website at <https://schoolfordeacons.org> or contact the Rev. Hailey McKeefry at ops@schoolfordeacons.org. If you are considering entering the discernment process to study for the Diaconate, contact Amy Cook at the Diocese of California, at amyc@diocal.org.

WINTER NIGHTS UPDATE FROM 2020-2021

Winter Nights ended its 2020-2021 Shelter season on June 14th with 4 families, their Covid-protocol limit. Parents and children were able to be sheltered, fed and kept healthy, through 32 weeks, at the height of the Covid pandemic in Contra Costa. No one got Covid!!!!

Families worked with staff to resolve issues, find jobs, save money and create nest eggs going forward. But, despite best efforts no one was able to secure their own home. Housing is scarce for low-income families. All of these clients will remain part of the Winter Nights family of alumni through Continued Success, where resources and contacts will continue to be available to them.

The Shelter program will begin again in September 2021 and run through June 2022. It will be hosted by 18 congregations who have offered their sites for two weeks at a time (including St. Anselm's -- see page 4). Dozens and dozens of faith communities and community groups will lend a hand throughout the 36-week schedule, and volunteers will be welcomed back within the shelter. The shelter will also be returning to a more normal capacity of about 24-26 clients (6-7 families) at a time.

The other significant change for the organization is that Judy Stillman, Winter Nights Executive Director, has retired as a result of the agency's transition from a program of the Interfaith Council to an independent nonprofit. This transition expanded the role of the Executive Director, and Judy preferred to focus on aspects of the program that she loves and are essential to the program's success and, as such, she has agreed to continue her involvement with the program.

After research and discussion, the Board announced the unanimous selection of Bill Shaw as the next Executive Director of Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc. A native of Berkeley, Bill joined Winter Nights in 2010 as a Site Supervisor. He became the Program Manager in 2014. Upon Mahmood Barakzai's departure, Bill assumed the responsibilities of Program Director, with the title bestowed in 2019. He has a BA in Child Development and an MA in Spirituality and Culture. Before joining Winter Nights, he worked with the Hannah Boys Center and St Vincent's Home for Boys as a counselor and trainer, with an Adventure Travel company as Operations Manager, and with AMC Theaters as a General Manager.

EPISCOPAL MIGRATION MINISTRIES

Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), the refugee and migration ministry of The Episcopal Church, needs your support to welcome our Afghan allies to communities across the country. EMM is one of nine national refugee resettlement agencies tasked with the challenging and life-saving work of supporting Afghans who arrive with parolee status. The Afghan Parolee Services program provides very limited support only for parolees first 30-90 days; your donations can ensure they have a safe place to live and access to basic needs during and beyond that period. EMM will need to provide at least \$3,000 worth of housing and cash assistance for each person arriving on parolee status.

How You Can Help:

Donate to Neighbors Welcome: Afghan Allies Fund: Financial support is critical at this time. Donations to the Neighbors Welcome: Afghan Allies Fund will provide the housing assistance, medical services, and financial support for basic necessities.

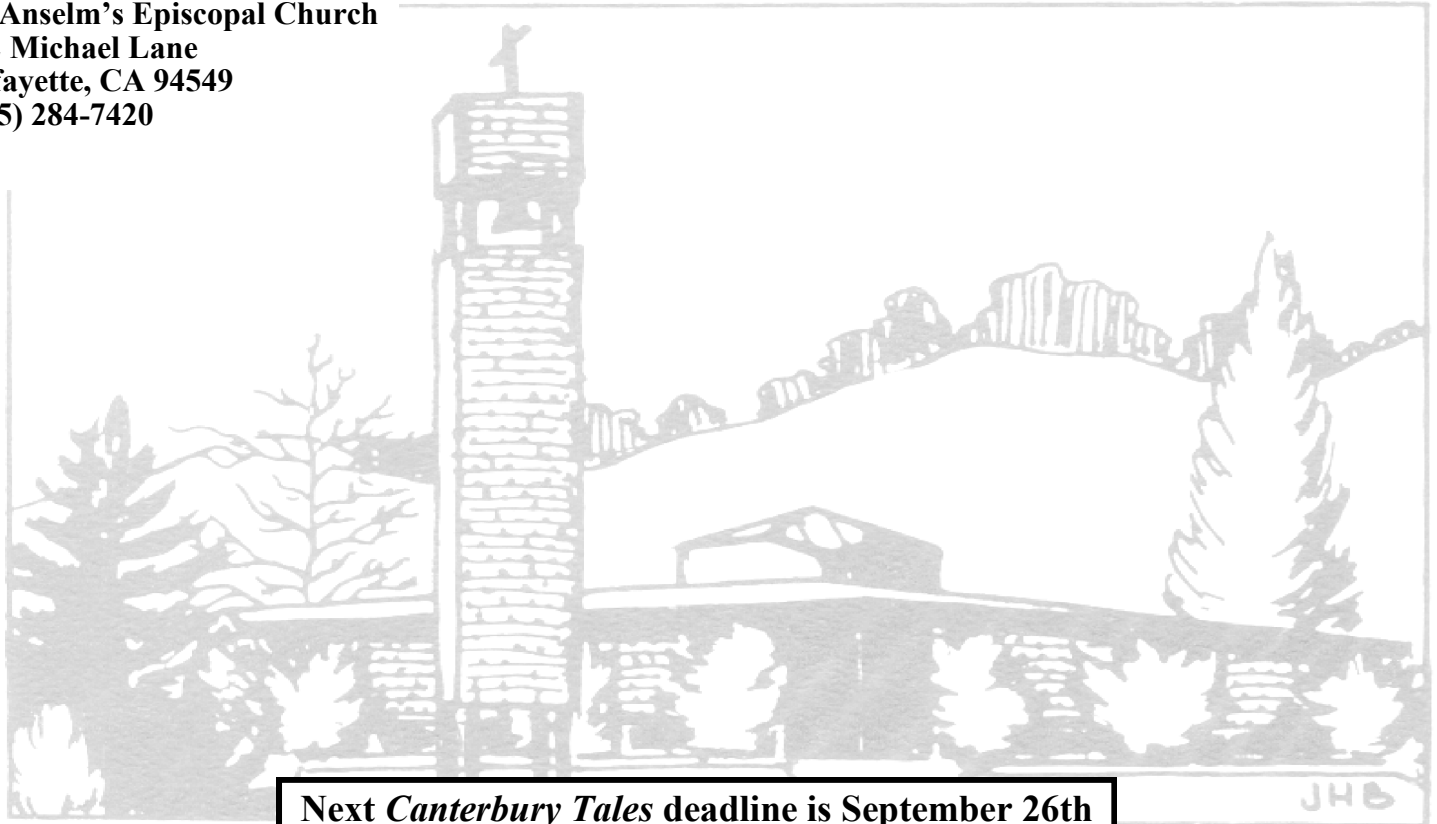
Complete the Volunteer/Housing/Sponsor Interest Form: To offer volunteer support, community sponsorship support, or housing – whether short-term or long-term – please fill out the interest form.

Map of EMM Affiliate Partners: Connect with an EMM local affiliate. Visit affiliate websites, sign up for their emails, and stay tuned for ways you can volunteer to support their work. If you are not near an EMM affiliate, please visit www.rcusa.org to find opportunities closer to you.

Advocate to Evacuate and Resettle our Afghan Allies

Take action in support of our Afghan allies by completing the action alert from The Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations.

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Next *Canterbury Tales* deadline is September 26th

SCHEDULE OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS

September 7th and each Tuesday in September, Morning Prayer will be held via Zoom at 9:00 AM. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at orchidsnrch@yahoo.com.

September 7th Grief Support Group will meet via Zoom at 12:00 noon. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at orchidsnrch@yahoo.com.

September 8th and each Wednesday in September, Evening Bible Study will meet via Zoom at 7:00. To be invited, email Cathy Witkay at cathy.w@stanselms.ws.

September 12th, Cancer Support Group will meet via Zoom at 12:00 noon. To be invited, email Julie Rinker-berger at jrpmaggie@hotmail.com.

September 15th, Memorial for K.C. Cannon will be held at the church at 4:00 PM.

September 20th, Vestry will meet via Zoom at 7:00 PM. Vestry members will receive an email from Father John with the meeting link.
