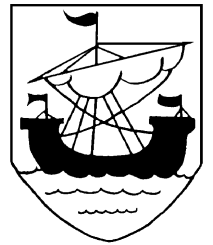


Canterbury Tales



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

September, 2022

From The Rector

Come and See

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' John 1: 43-46

Come and see – three simple words that will change the world. Jesus says it first to some of John the Baptist's followers who, on John's testimony, encounter Jesus and want to know where he is staying. After spending time with Jesus one of the two, Andrew, tells his brother, Peter, what they have found – the Messiah. The next day, Jesus finds and invites Philip, who tells Nathanael he has found the one they were looking for. "Come and see," Philip says. Later in John's gospel, the woman at the well will make the same invitation to her townspeople after encountering Jesus: "Come and see." And many do.

It is the simplest of invitations. It does not use lofty language. It does not impose belief. It does not intrude. It does not interpret. It simply invites. Come and see.

As it turns out, when it comes to the church, this simple invitation, or any invitation for that matter, is an extremely powerful tool. Over the last few decades, the church has experienced a dramatic decline in membership and attendance across denominations, with lot of people wondering how to reverse the trend. But a two-year pandemic piled on top has only made matters worse. Now throw in the loss of a rector and you have our situation at St. Anselm's. We are most definitely a smaller group than we used to be.

This is not new news to you. We are all aware of the trend and our situation. Over the course of the summer your search committee has conducted numerous listening sessions seeking your input into the challenges we face at St. Anselm's, the future you envision for it, and the gifts and characteristics of the person you think can lead it there. Not surprisingly, dwindling (and aging) membership was among the most common concerns. As for what you want in a new rector, one who can bring in throngs new members was a desire you frequently expressed. The implication, of course, is the sooner we can get someone like that to St. Anselm's, the sooner they can turn things around.

The reality (and dare I say the good news), however, is that few people visit or join a new church because of its clergy. This has been borne out by a significant amount of research. Although the data differs slightly across studies, the general trend is clear. The Alban Institute's publication *The Inviting Church*, provides an illustrative example. It found that:

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Anselm's Angels

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

~ Winston Churchill

Thank you to our hard working Rector Search Committee. Led by **Peg Matson** (who created an amazing St. Anselm's historical timeline) and **Sylvia Williams**, committee members **Sally Fischer**, **Don Liddle**, **Marian Mulkey**, **Julie Rinkenberger**, **Gerry Starr** and **Shanda Young** conducted numerous in-person and on-line "listening sessions" to help direct the search for our next rector.

Special thanks to **Marty Fischer** for taking the lead to recruit choir members who have agreed to lead the congregational singing twice a month. Thank you to these singers who stepped forward: **Al Eames**, **Marty Fischer**, **Vicki Pappas**, **Tom Pappas**, **Barbara Thornton**, **Avon Wilson**, **Cathy Witkay** and **Paul Witkay**. We're still looking for more folks to join us! Let us know if you're interested.

Thank you **Chris Young** for his tireless work as our official cameraman and Zoom expert and to **Jon Martin** for taking over when Chris takes a well deserved Sunday off. Additionally, another big thank you to Chris to organizing the removal of the juniper from the courtyard and Michael Lane hill along with ongoing property upkeep including some "back to school" maintenance for the preschool and installing the new office signs.

WINTER NIGHTS UPDATE

Our Winter Nights dates have changed. Our start time is a week later. The families will now be with us from Monday, October 24 until Monday, November 7. The Church of the Latter Day Saints in San Ramon will be volunteering one of those weeks.

If you are interested in volunteering in some way, please let Eva Woo or me know. We'll need people to help with unloading the truck on the afternoon that the families arrive, October 24. We'll need a breakfast team to arrive mornings at 6 AM and set out food for breakfast. We'll need volunteers to bring food for dinners, and volunteers to shop for food. We also welcome anyone willing to tutor and help children with homework.

Of all the volunteer work that I have done at St. Anselm's, I've found this to be the most meaningful. These families have gone from being a label, "homeless." and a stereotype in my mind, to being persons, like me, who have fallen on hard times. Interaction with the parents and play with the children has been a rich and rewarding experience.

If you have questions or think you might want to volunteer, please get in touch with Eva or me.

Eva Woo (925) 876-9435 or eva94549@gmail.com, Anne Brown (925) 788-0664 or annechalfantbrown@gmail.com.

HELLO FROM MICHAEL LANE PRESCHOOL!

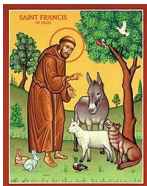
Our first day back to school was August 23rd, and it has been wonderful having the children back at school. The preschool is at capacity with 25 students, 17 attending each day, and we still have a waitlist. This year on our staff we have Danielle Mallari back for her 3rd year, and Xiomara DiMaio, and Carmen Sanchez joining us for their first. Xiomara and Carmen come to us with preschool experience, musical talents, and a love of children!

In early August we held a Parent Work Party where we sanded and stained tables, painted, put together new furniture, cleaned windows, and more. I look forward to having another one this spring and hope someone has a power washer!

I am thrilled to announce that we are allowing parents to come in and out of the school gates to pick up their children. They can observe what their child is playing, who they are playing with, and meet some other families. For the last 2 years, parents had to drop their child off at the gate, and now families are back checking out the school!

Already in my 3rd year as Director, I am feeling more comfortable and confident. I look forward to a great year ahead!

Warmly, Holly Higgins



Blessing of the Animals

*The annual
Blessing of the Animals
will be on October 2nd
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!*

COME ONE & ALL!

We are celebrating our Fall return to St. Anselm's after our fun filled summer of travels here and yon.

On Sunday, September 11th, celebrate with our choir and live music! Stay for all manner of tasty treats so come hungry for food and companionship. Hope to see as many of you as possible.

Your happy hosts:

Katie Taggart, Sylvia Williams,
and Peg. Matson

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newsletter of

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Editor: Cathy S. Witkay

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

St. Anselm's Staff
The Rev. Kathy Trapani, Interim Rector
The Rev. Naomi Chamberlain-Harris, Deacon
Cathy Witkay, Office Manager

The Senior Warden

Hello Everyone!

Are you hanging on to the last days of summer like I am? The days are getting shorter but we have lots of pleasant weather ahead of us! Our great weather makes our outdoor coffee hours a good time to catch up with others and share our summer experiences. Please join us for in person services and coffee every Sunday. For those of you that need to attend Zoom services, there is also an online coffee hour for everyone to keep in touch.

Our Rector Search Committee is moving along with the creation of our Parish Profile. Thanks to all who participated in the Listening Sessions or contributed your ideas and desires in other ways. This is all being put together as an accurate picture of our St. Anselm's community.

As I announced during a Sunday Service, your Wardens, Marty Fischer and myself, have plans to meet with the Wardens of St. Timothy's to share ideas. We're hoping this might be a starting point of sharing between local Episcopal parishes to learn more about each other's programs and share successful ways we've navigated the challenges of Covid and other issues of our times.

Looking ahead on the calendar start asking your family and friends to join us for the Blessing of the Animals! This will be held on Sunday October 2nd during our usual 9:00 service time. We invite everyone to join in to have their pets blessed. We've had some very cute pets in the past and there have been a few very interesting interactions as well!

Joan Martin

Vestry Meeting Updates

At the August 15 Vestry meeting our primary discussion items included:

- 1) Music – we are in conversation with two organists, both of whom have very limited availability but will provide live music at our Sunday worship from time to time;
- 2) Michael Lane Preschool rent (action tabled to a later date);
- 3) Review and approval of Q1 and Q2 Financial Reports; and
- 4) Updates from the Rector Search Committee.

For more information, contact any member of the Vestry or Rev. Kathy. Vestry meeting minutes and financial reports are available on request. The vestry next meets on September 19th.

Sacred Ground and Racial Reconciliation Updates

It has been two years since St. Anselm's hosted two well-attended and deeply affecting Sacred Ground circles. Sacred Ground is a multi-week film- and readings-based dialog program, developed by the national Episcopal Church, exploring the history of racial ideas and racism in our country and in the Episcopal church. Those of us who participated in St. Anselm's sessions, held via Zoom from September 2020 to early 2021, found the series to be eye-opening, thought-provoking, and inspiring.

Our parishioners were not the only ones inspired and challenged by Sacred Ground. To date, about 25,000 Episcopalians across the country have participated in Sacred Ground circles. Some have used Sacred Ground as a foundation from which to embark on specific ministries of truth-telling and reconciliation. A few churches and institutions that have a specific legacy tied to slavery have taken tangible steps to make amends. For example, the Diocese of Maryland established a Truth and Reconciliation commission that has undertaken historical research, engaged in ceremonies of healing and reconciliation, and established a \$1 million seed fund to support community organizations seeking to repair the racial breach. Other churches and participants were inspired by Sacred Ground to engage in healing ministries among populations harmed by systemic racism, such as American Indians.

In addition to these local efforts, the national church is advancing work on racial equity with deepened clarity and purpose. At this year's National Convention several steps were taken to acknowledge and begin to address the harms of white supremacy and colonialism. The Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equity and Justice was established as a voluntary society seeking to share resources, provide support, and serve as a network for parishes and individuals working to improve equity and justice for people of all races and ethnicities. Resolutions were passed to underscore the need for a racial reckoning within the Episcopal church and to acknowledge and make amends for the harms that have resulted from indigenous boarding schools.

This fall, the St. Anselm's Christian Formation Commission will host a Sacred Ground "refresher" series for those who participated in the 2020-21 circles. On two Tuesday evenings (October 1 and November 8) we will revisit the recently updated Sacred Ground curriculum which now includes additional videos and discussion guides. These sessions will be an opportunity to share updates, discuss new material, and reflect on where we are and where we are called to go. At this point, we are planning evening sessions (7-8:30 pm) only, but let us know if you are interested and daytime is more convenient. If interest is sufficient, we will schedule a parallel set of daytime sessions.

In addition, for those who did not participate in the 2020 circles, we are considering convening a new Sacred Ground circle or circles early in 2023. The Sacred Ground curriculum now comprises 11 classes of 1.5 to 2 hours each, likely held biweekly, with considerable time required for reading and video viewing between sessions. If you are interested in participating in the full 11-class curriculum, let us know.

To learn more about the Sacred Ground Series, visit <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground/>. To learn more about the Episcopal Church's commitment to racial reconciliation, see <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/racial-reconciliation/>. To express interest or get more information about next steps at St. Anselm's, contact Anne Brown annehalfantbrown@gmail.com or Marian Mulkey marianmulkey@comcast.net, co-chairs of the Christian Formation Commission.

From the Interim Rector (Continued from page 1)

- 2% came by advertisement
- 6% came because of a pastoral invitation
- 6% came by an organized evangelism campaign
- **86% came because they were invited by a friend or relative**

A 2020 study by a church coaching organization asking what initially brought people to church yielded similar results:

- 6-8% came by their own initiative
- 2-3% came because of a program offered
- 8-10% because they liked the pastor
- 3-4% had a need met by the church
- **70-85% were invited by a relative or friend (the average was 83%)**

When church growth expert Win Arn was asked if there was one specific reason that visitors came to church he responded: the friendship factor. Having asked over 50,000 people over ten years why they came to church, between 75% and 90% said, "I began attending because someone invited me."

This is very good news! It means that you, the people of St. Anselm's, do not have to wait for the arrival of a new rector or depend on their skill set to turn things around! Nor should you! Because you, yourselves, possess the power to turn the tide. You can do it with a simple invitation: Come and see!

We all know someone who is seeking the love, comfort, and healing God offers. We all know someone who is looking for community and companionship, a place to belong, a place where they are unconditionally accepted. And we have an amazing, welcoming, caring, compassionate, life-giving, generous, spirit-filled community to offer them. So, invite someone to church -- not for the sake of church growth, or better numbers, or a stronger balance sheet, but because we have something of great value to share that they need to experience for themselves. Come and see!

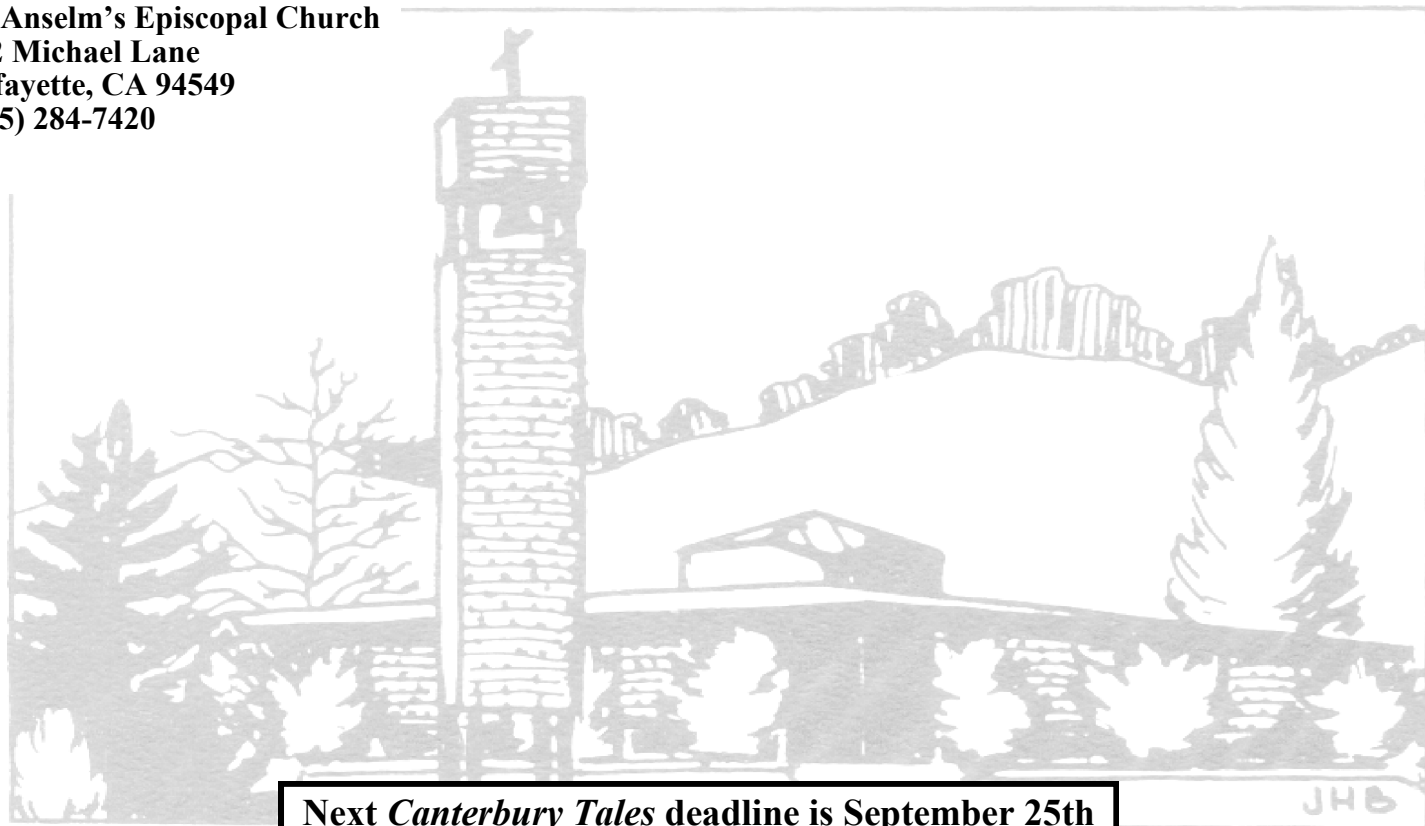
Kathy+

SUNDAY WORSHIP

As has been the practice at St. Anselm's for some time, we are changing the form of our Sunday worship part way through the "Sundays after Pentecost" or "Ordinary Time," the lengthy season between Pentecost and Advent. Also in keeping with St. Anselm's tradition, we will be drawing on services from another part of the Anglican Communion.

For the first part of the season our worship was from *Enriching Our Worship*, a supplemental liturgical resource of the Episcopal Church. Beginning Sunday, September 4 we will worship from *Common Worship, Services and Prayers for the Church of England*. Interestingly, the official book of worship for the Church of England remains the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* (our most recent revision of the Prayer Book is 1979). *Common Worship* is actually a family of volumes which, together with the *Book of Common Prayer*, make up the official liturgical resources for the Church of England. As the Book's preface puts it, and as is always the case in Anglican worship, "The services provided here are rich and varied. This reflects the multiplicity of contexts in which worship is offered today. They encourage an imaginative engagement in worship, opening the way for people in the varied circumstances of their lives to experience the love of God in Jesus Christ in the life and power of the Holy Spirit. In the worship of God the full meaning and beauty of our humanity is consummated and our lives are opened to the promise God makes for all creation – to transform and renew it in love and goodness."

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Next *Canterbury Tales* deadline is September 25th

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS:

September 6th and each Tuesday in September — Morning Prayer will be led by Deacon Naomi via Zoom at 9 AM. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at orchidsnrch@yahoo.com.

September 6th — Grief Support Group will meet via Zoom at 12:00 noon. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at orchidsnrch@yahoo.com.

September 7th and each Wednesday in September — Rector Search Committee will be held via Zoom at 7:00 PM.

September 8th and each Thursday in September — Evening Bible Study will meet via Zoom at 7:00 PM. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at orchidsnrch@yahoo.com.

September 19th — Vestry will meet via Zoom at 7:00 PM. Vestry members will receive an email from Chris Young with the meeting link.

September 18th — Michael Lane Preschool Board will meet via Zoom at 1:30 PM. Board members will receive an email from Cathy Witkay with the meeting link.

October 2nd — Cancer Support Group will meet via Zoom at 11:30 AM. To be invited, email Julie Rinkenberger at jrjpmaggie@hotmail.com.
