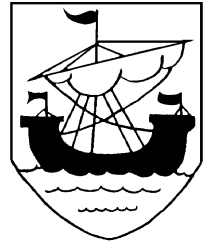


Canterbury Tales

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



December, 2021

From The Interim Rector

I am humbled by the trust and confidence you have placed in me by calling me as your interim rector, and I am excited to partner with you in this important time in the life of St. Anselm's. I understand that this must feel like a very difficult and unsettling time. Change and transition are challenging. You have only recently said good-bye to your beloved rector. It hurts. It is hard. You have not yet had a chance to find a new rhythm and way of being without him and are being asked to place your trust in doing so in someone you do not yet know.

So, I hope in this writing I can give you some idea of who your new partner is. I have served as a priest in the Diocese of California (and in Contra Costa County) for over twenty years and am currently associated with Holy Cross, Castro Valley. I have served as an associate rector and, most recently, as interim rector of two congregations that found themselves in situations just like yours. My husband, Tom, and I live in Danville, where we raised our four children. We are blessed that they and their spouses all live within striking distance, especially now that we are new grandparents! I attended college at UCLA (where Tom and I met) and earned an MBA from UC Berkeley and my MDiv from CDSP. I am an avid runner, a private pilot, and enjoy building things with wood. I love sports of any and all kinds, especially college basketball and my beloved UCLA Bruins.

You will find that I am by nature a fairly quiet person. I prefer listening to talking, and my style is one of collaboration and teamwork. I do not have all the answers but am confident that when we open ourselves to God and each other we will find them together. In a nutshell, my way of life is shaped and guided by my baptismal covenant; it is, for me, the Way of Jesus.

I am sure that you have many questions and uncertainties about what this interim time will look and feel like, what the steps in the search process are, and how we will get from here to calling your next rector. I assure you that there will be plenty of time and opportunity to talk about all of that. For now, I can tell you that, despite what it might feel like at this moment, this transition time can and will be marked by profound growth as a community as we rediscover together what God is calling the community of St. Anselm's to become. We will have opportunities to try new things, try old things in some different ways, and understand more fully those things which are most sacred to the life and identity of this community of faith. There will also be many opportunities for you to offer input into what is most important to you. When the time comes, I encourage you to take advantage of them, and to let your voice be heard.

Most importantly, this transition time will not be one in which we simply bide our time awaiting a new rector. We still have the work of God's kingdom to do. I look forward to working alongside and getting to know you as we accomplish it.

Yours in Christ, Kathy+

Anselm's Angels

A huge thank you to everyone who helped to make the November 21st celebration of Father John's 23 years at St. Anselm's so memorable: Special thanks to **Marty Fischer** for coordinating the event activities and to **Sylvia Williams** and **Sheila Wiegand** for coordinating everything associated with the brunch which followed the service. Special thank yous to our mistress of ceremonies **Shanda Young** and to all of the speakers: **Liz Sutton, Jeff Jaeger, Debbie Dineen, Sally Fischer, Keith Pearce, Eva Woo, Elisabeth Ward, Paul Witkay, Pam McGrath, Leslie Gleason, and Cathy Witkay.** The musicians and choir: **Andrew & Caroline Huddart, Gail Clarke, Roseanna Conlon, Carol Fontana, Diane Gilbert, Don Helmholz, Piaa Mitchell, Tom & Vicki Pappas, Elaine Sherwood, Barbara Thornton, Avon Wilson and Cathy Witkay.** And a cast of thousands who helped with set up and clean up, served as ushers, collected wine, helped with serving and provided & arranged flowers: **Bob Eddy, Peter & William Grace, Pam & Bob Green, Zoe Hekmaty, Dave Hightower, Laura Ho, Trevor Holoch, Barbara Krusi, Don Liddle, Alex McDonald, Joan, Jeremy & Jon Martin, Doug Merrill, Marian Mulkey, Robert Parrish, Keith & Joni Pearce, John & Evan Powers, Gordon Repp, Keri Wiegand Smith, Elisabeth Ward, Paul Witkay, Eva Woo, and Chris & Shanda Young.**

Thanks to **Neva Flaherty, Elisabeth Ward** and **Chris Young** for their work in identifying and preparing the area around the native oak dedicated to Father John at the south end of the parking lot.

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ANSELM'S ANGELS *(continued from page 1)*

Chris Young led a very successful Work Party on November 6th. Thank you to everyone who responded cheerfully to our first work party in more than 18 months: **Jeff Boero, Marty Fischer, Neva Flaherty, Zoe Hekmaty, Dave Hightower, Don Liddle, Joan Martin, Doug Merrill, Evan Powers, Gordon Repp, Dimitri & Lee Seletzky, John Sutton, George Wasson and JP Zhang.**

Lastly, thank you to **Andrew Huddart** and **Chris Young** for recording more hymns for our use throughout the remainder of the church year.

CONGRATULATIONS EVA WOO SLAVITT!

Our very own Eva Woo Slavitt was installed as the Canon for Marketing and Communications of Grace Cathedral during the Evensong service on November 4th. If you would like to see the service, please [click here](#) for a recording of the full service.

**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 in 2021 and the beginning of 2022. Thanks to Joni Pearce, we now have a SignUpGenius form to streamline hosting signups. If you are willing to help out, please go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c044bada722a2f85-coffee> and select a date or dates that will work for you. Thank you!!!

NEW EMAIL

We are moving all church emails to a new domain. Please use the following email for Cathy Witkay: cathy.w@stanselms.us. The current email for Cathy will forward to the new email address, but please update your directories. Email information for Rev. Kathy will follow once she begins her time at St. Anselm's.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

To donate poinsettias (in memory of a loved one, in honor of someone or in thanksgiving) to decorate our sanctuary during the Christmas season, please email Cathy Witkay with the desired dedication no later than Monday, December 20th. The cost is \$15.00 per plant and checks should be made payable to the St. Anselm's Altar Guild.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Attention: Commission / Organization Chairs - If you have something new or exciting to share it's not too early to begin composing your annual report. Please submit it by the end of this year, via e-mail to cathy.w@stanselms.us, if possible. Thank you.

Christmas Services

Christmas Story & Carols without communion (in-person & via Zoom)	December 24th 5:00 p.m.
First Sunday after Christmas (in-person & via Zoom)	December 26th 9:00 a.m.

Canterbury Tales is the monthly newsletter of

St. Anselm's Episcopal Church
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Phone: (925) 284-7420

e-mail: cathy.w@stanselms.us
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. Kathy Trapani, Interim Rector
The Rev. Naomi Chamberlain-Harris, Deacon
Cathy Witkay, Office Manager

The Senior Warden

Welcome Kathy Trapani, our new Interim Rector!

So, it's official! We now have two Kathy's running St. Anselm's. Kathy with a "k" and Cathy with a "c."

Two words came to my mind as I wrote this month's Canterbury Tales: change and gratitude.

Change. We've all had to do it. I'm not sure how everyone feels about change. I often fear change. I think it's the unknown and also the comfort of routines that will undoubtedly be different from change. However, once the change starts and the unknowns due to change become known the anxiety or fear levels start to diminish. Prime example is when we quickly changed over to Zoom services due to the pandemic. So many unknowns when this change occurred. I think we all started getting used to it. In fact, the positive outcome from zoom are parishioners who moved away started attending our services!

Changes are ahead of as Kathy Trapani joins St. Anselm's. We are so fortunate to have Kathy join us. She's been an interim rector twice and resides in Danville. What particularly impressed me during the entire interview process was how empathetic she was towards our congregation. We asked many questions, one in particular was, "How would you spend the first 4-6 weeks as interim rector?" Her answer was she would spend it getting to know the congregation, staff and vestry.-- Throughout the interview, Kathy shared with us the importance of listening to the congregation and allowing time for us to learn about who we are as a community. Sage advice from an experienced interim rector!

Gratitude. I am so grateful for the community of St Anselm's, the Vestry, Cathy Witkay and the 23 years with Fr. John. Grateful to have partnered with Joan Martin and Alex McDonald in the interim rector search. This is my first time as Senior Warden and I could not have done the work set upon me without the love and support from you all. I am grateful that we have found an Interim Rector, Rev. Kathy Trapani who will start Sunday, December 12th. I am grateful to the community of St. Anselm's for being their authentic loving/welcoming selves when Kathy came here to guest preach and for winning her over to want to join St. Anselm's.

I'm sure many of you are curious to meet Kathy Trapani, as I mentioned her first Sunday preaching will be December 12th. I plan to host a special coffee hour following the service. This is a great chance to meet her in person. I hope to see many of you all there.

Eva Woo Slavitt



The Rev. Kathy Trapani

Harvest Festival Praying for Holiday Miracles

December 13th is the start of Trinity Center's Evening Program whereby Trinity Center manages and operates a winter shelter at the National Guard Armory in partnership with the city of Walnut Creek and the California State Military, where up to 50 homeless neighbors can escape the cold, rainy, winter weather. Trinity Center provides dinner each evening, breakfast each morning, and a warm bed all winter long, in addition to their year-round Monday through Friday Day Services and case management. This annual winter shelter helps to save lives by limiting exposure to the ravages of cold wet weather. It is hard to imagine a more critical outreach to the poor and destitute. St Anselm's, through the annual Harvest Festival, helped to start this program in 2016 and has been a major supporter ever since.

December marks the final push for the Harvest Festival Campaign to help fund Trinity Center's expanding programs. So far the email and video campaign has raised about \$40k with hopes that we can repeat the "December Miracle" of last year, when one of our congregation members passed our communications to a friend who answered the appeal with a \$50,000 gift. That resulted in a \$101,000 Harvest Festival campaign, a record we hope we can top this year. So, please pass on the needs at Trinity Center to your friends and maybe we can repeat, or even surpass, the Christmas Miracle of 2020.

This year you can also get involved with the Winter Shelter program. They need volunteers for many purposes from meal preparation and service, to making beds and transportation to and from Trinity Center and the Walnut Creek Armory. To read more about the needs and to volunteer check out www.trinitycenterwc.org/winter-evening-program/

The Harvest Festival support for Trinity Center has been vital throughout the years and helped provide many people with essential services that have kept them safe, and to find pathways to improved lives. "Thank You" to all who have supported this effort and shared the needs with friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers. We ask you to continue to support this crucial cause by building the Trinity Center support network. The more we can raise, the more Trinity Center can do to meet the ever growing needs of those without shelter and those living with the devastating effects of poverty.

Marty Fischer
Harvest Festival Committee Chairman

An Update from Michael Lane Preschool

I sure hope you had a lovely Thanksgiving holiday!

This past month, we learned many Thanksgiving songs, buried a few pumpkins in our garden with hopes that a few pumpkins will grow there next year, enjoyed Music Class with Ms. Julia, went on a nature walk down Murray Lane to collect interesting things, and did lots of PLAYING!

We are grateful for the sunshine and the rain and look forward to some winter crafts and activities this December. Today we painted pots to plant a Paperwhite bulb for a family present.

Wishing you and your family a wonderful December,

Holly Higgins
Director



This Holiday Season, Offer the Gift of Remembering to Those Who Are Grieving

By Rev. Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D., Founder and Executive Director of Stephen Ministries

With the holidays quickly approaching, a season that's normally a time for celebration may have a more somber tone for some—particularly those who have lost loved ones in the past year or so. Someone who would have been there to share the Thanksgiving meal, help hang the Christmas lights, or ring in the New Year is gone, with each event a reminder of their absence. The painful feelings that come as a result, especially when it seems everyone else is celebrating, can make the holidays a very difficult time. In addition to all this, people often avoid those who are grieving, uncertain what to say or do. But there's a simple, powerful way anyone can offer care: giving the gift of remembering the grieving person's loved one with them.

Say the Loved One's Name

The gift of remembering begins with being willing to say the loved one's name. One of the most common misconceptions about grief is that talking about a person's loss or saying the name of the deceased will only cause more pain. But the reality is just the opposite—people want to talk about the loved one they've lost. During the research for my book *Don't Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart*, people I spoke with expressed that sentiment almost universally. One shared, "Mentioning my wife's name after she died was so hard for some people. It was almost as if she never existed. But I want them to remember her."

That's why it's important to say the loved one's name. Doing so acknowledges the loss and communicates that you're safe to talk to, that you won't shy away or abandon them because of their grief. In other words, it lets the grieving person know that you're with them in their grief and invites them to talk about what they're going through. You don't have to say a lot. Some brief, compassionate words are often enough—for example, "The holidays must be hard for you without [name]" or "I remember the time when [name] . . ." So, don't be afraid to mention the name of the deceased loved one, because saying their name opens the door to the gift of remembering.

Listening to and Sharing Memories

Once you've opened the door to remembering, be ready to listen to the grieving person's memories. Sharing memories is a way for them to express their love for the deceased, feel closer to their lost loved one, and experience comfort. Although a grieving person can certainly reflect and remember on their own, there's something special about sharing memories with someone who will listen and care. Whether they're sharing happy memories, sad stories about the deceased's final days, funny anecdotes, or somber reflections, your being there to listen sends a clear message: You are not alone.

Each conversation is different. Some people may want to talk and talk, while others may be eager to hear your recollections about their loved one. It varies by individual, so follow the other person's lead. Stay focused on their needs, and you'll be on the right track to providing meaningful care.

Embracing Every Emotion

One reason people often hesitate to bring up someone's loss is because they're worried about how the grieving person might respond. Memories of a loved one may bring strong emotions—anger, sadness, loneliness, regret—as well as the tears that often come with such feelings. It can be uncomfortable to encounter these strong feelings because we don't know what to say or do. But here's a secret: Usually, the best response is simply to listen and embrace whatever emotions might come. You don't have to say exactly the right thing; in fact, trying to find the perfect words often leads to clichés, platitudes, or other unhelpful responses. In contrast, listening to, accepting, and validating a grieving person's emotions brings comfort.

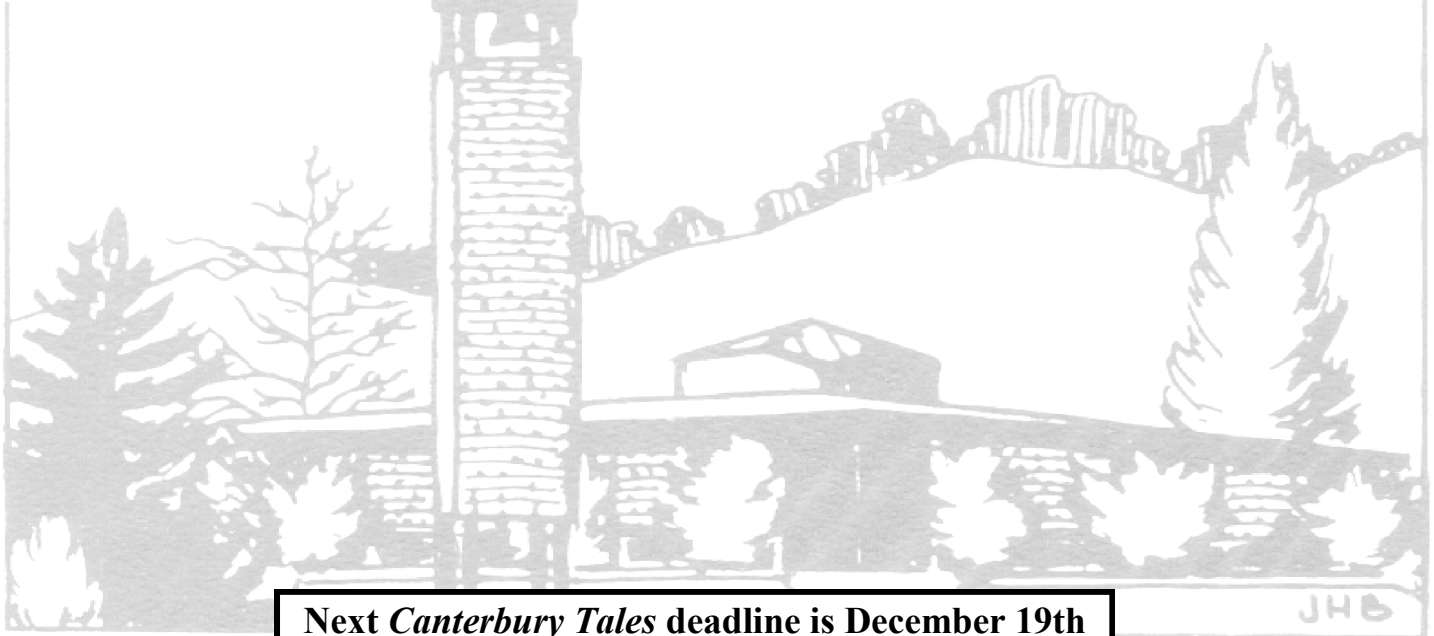
Of course, it isn't always easy to listen as someone cries, expresses anger, or shares how lonely they feel. But when you set aside your discomfort and focus on being present with the other person, you'll be providing exactly the kind of care they need.

Making the Holidays a Little Easier

Grief has no expiration date. Whether it's been a year, two years, or longer since someone lost a loved one, consider offering the gift of remembering to them, too. No matter how long it's been, listening and reminiscing together is a wonderful way to bring comfort, deepen relationships, offer care, and bring Christ's healing love to those who are hurting during the holidays.

Doing that can make a difficult holiday season a little easier.

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Next *Canterbury Tales* deadline is December 19th

SCHEDULE OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS

December 1st and each Wednesday in December — Evening Bible Study will meet via Zoom at 7:00. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at orchidsnrch@yahoo.com.

December 5th — Cancer Support Group will meet via Zoom at 1:00 PM. To be invited, email Julie Rinkenberger at jripmaggie@hotmail.com.

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

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

December 20th — Vestry will meet via Zoom at 7:00 PM. Vestry members will receive an email from Rev. Kathy with the meeting link.
