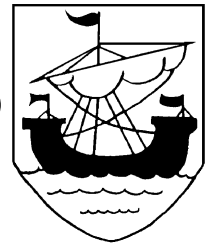


# Canterbury Tales



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

January 2024

## *From Rev. Will*

This week, the Bay Area--and the world--are mourning the passing of the Very Reverend Alan Jones, who served as the Dean of Grace Cathedral from 1985 to 2009. Although my own working relationship with Alan at Grace was relatively short, I am heartbroken to lose him because our friendship continued after his retirement. Alan remained a steadfast mentor and supporter, and was always eager to meet to hear what I'd been up to and offer his advice.

While we are all saddened to lose Alan's presence from our daily lives, we also rejoice in the imprint he left behind on the world. To name a few of his gifts, he was a compelling homilist, and embraced liturgical and other offerings, like the Cathedral's beloved labyrinth brought from Chartres by Lauren Artress, that spoke to San Francisco without diluting or compromising the message of Christianity. He also carefully developed the Cathedral's physical plant, built a strong team of clergy and lay staff, and understood the essential role of fundraising in keeping the place going and growing.

Much of what Alan preached and achieved is traceable to the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield, West Yorkshire, in England. Alan credited this extraordinary community, often referred to as "Mirfield" for short, with training him for the priesthood. Six Christian Socialist priests established this community in the 1890s, deciding for some reason that this unassuming village, 200 miles from London and full of strong Northern English accents and textile factories, was just right for what they had planned. When my husband Matt and I visited Mirfield on a quiet summer afternoon six years ago, we were both struck by the contemplative yet welcoming atmosphere on the grounds. "We welcome others to come, see, learn and share," the brothers of Mirfield write on their website.

Mirfield may be a contemplative monastic community, but they look outward as well. Mirfield was deeply involved in the struggle against apartheid, and today maintains ecumenical ties with the Roman Catholic Church and other institutions. In addition to Alan, we have known other friends, such as the Reverend Rick Fabian of St. Gregory's of Nyssa fame, who have gone to Mirfield. Bernard Mayes, a worker priest, journalist and activist who served as the founding chairman of NPR, and who introduced me to Matt, also attended Mirfield. (And Matt himself was eager for me to point out that this unassuming village has been put on the map in another way: by being the birthplace of actors Jodie Whittaker and Patrick Stewart, who have had top billing in his two most beloved shows, Doctor Who and Star Trek respectively.)

I believe Mirfield and its alumni have lessons for us here at St. Anselm's. The core vows taken at Mirfield are threefold. First, "stability," which according to the brothers, refers to staying with given situations and particular people rather than chopping and changing. Second, "obedience," which for

*(Continued on page 4)*

## *Anselm's Angels*

A heartfelt thank you to the special angels who helped prepare our sanctuary for the Christmas season: **Joan Martin, Sharon Harichandran, Sylvia Williams, Mallory Williams, Dharmini Harichandran, Edee Allison, Sara Swimmer, Sally Fischer, Joni Pearce, Eva Woo Slavitt, Naomi Chamberlain-Harris, and Jon Martin.**

A very special thank you to all those who participated in the Trinity Center Holiday Luncheon and sang Christmas Carols to the 90+ Trinity Center clients: **Jon Martin** (aka Santa Clause), **the Rev. John Sutton** (Luncheon Blessing and singer), **Maddie Chamberlain** (Choir Director) and singers **Liz Sutton, Marty and Sally Fischer, Bob and Georganne Eddy, Laura and Annabelle McInerney, Shelly Frost, Al Eames, Naomi Chamberlain-Harris, Betsy Donnelly** (St. Stephen's) plus a number of Trinity Center Staff and Clients.

Many thanks to the **Rev. Koshy Mathews** for being our guest celebrant for both services on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Special thanks to **Shelley and Jasmine Frost** for narrating the Christmas story at our Christmas Eve service.

A warm thank you to **Elisabeth Ward** for performing LEM duties for both services on Christmas Eve and **Eva Woo Slavitt** for serving on New Year's Eve. Also, Lectors, **Joni Pearce and Sally Fischer.** Many thanks to **Gary Bacon, Bob Eddy, Joan Martin and Doug Merrill** for

*(Continued on page 4)*

### **A CASE FOR LOVE – TUESDAY, JANUARY 23<sup>RD</sup>**

Hundreds of theaters around the US will have a one-time showing of this documentary inspired by Bishop Curry’s “teachings and writings on the power of unselfish love”. In addition to prominent Episcopalians such as Pete Buttigieg, Jon Meacham, and others, it mostly tells stories from everyday people. The director, a member of a Beverly Hills parish, feels that “the start of the year could be a conversation about hope and bringing people together to be a little more resilient. The showing is intended to launch “this month of intentional unselfish love”.

**Century Walnut Creek at 4pm and 7 pm  
Century Pleasant Hill at 4pm and 7pm**



### **SOCK DRIVE**

As Lent comes early this year, new white socks are needed more than ever for our homeless brothers and sisters. My basket will be in the church near the front doors waiting for your donations of socks. I will be collecting them until Palm Sunday and then will deliver them to Trinity Center. My deepest thanks for your generosity in this time of need in our community.

—Deacon Naomi



### **2024 ALTAR FLOWERS**

The 2024 Altar Flower donation chart is now available in the church, on the wall by the east entrance. By making a donation you can have altar flowers dedicated to the memory of a loved one, in honor of a family member or simply to the glory of God. Please sign-up for your selected date(s) and complete a dedication card from the stack next to the chart. You may also email [parish@stanselms.us](mailto:parish@stanselms.us) with your selected date(s) and dedication.

### **Opportunities for Growth During Lent**

The Christian Formation Commission is planning two opportunities to reflect, learn and engage with other community members during Lent. Mark your calendars; more details will be shared in early February.

#### ***Building Community In Times of Change***

This will be an in-person Speaker Series held on Sundays after church, beginning February 25<sup>th</sup> and continuing for four or five weeks.

Following a light lunch, these sessions will begin at 11:30 a.m. and conclude by 12:45 p.m.

#### ***Living Well Through Lent 2024: Practicing Forgiveness with All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind***

This will be a weekly contemplative series, convened via Zoom on Thursdays from 6 to 7 p.m. beginning February 22<sup>nd</sup>. It will be facilitated by members of the Christian Formation Commission and Rev. Will.

### **.SUNDAY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**GREETERS** to offer a warm welcome and a friendly face when people take the time to visit us every Sunday morning. If interested in helping, please contact Keith Pearce at [pistolprce@gmail.com](mailto:pistolprce@gmail.com) or call 650-281-6881.

**COUNTERS** to assist a Vestry member with the responsibility for counting and recording cash and checks on a written counter form and securing the deposit. If interested in volunteering as a counter, please contact Marty Fischer or Peg Matson.

**COFFEE HOUR HOSTS** to provide refreshments following the service. To sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c044bada722a2f85-coffee> or contact Sylvia Williams at [sw94565@yahoo.com](mailto:sw94565@yahoo.com) or 925-586-0730

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In-Person & Virtual Sunday Service:  
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

#### **St. Anselm’s Staff**

The Rev. Will Scott, Guest Priest  
The Rev. Naomi Chamberlain-Harris, Deacon  
Margaret Wolfe, Office Manager

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## *From The Senior Warden*

The Holidays are a very special time of the year for giving thanks for all we have, assessing what we accomplished and failed to do over the past year and, most importantly, setting new goals for the year ahead. It's a time of new beginnings, commitments and goal setting.

Looking forward to 2024, St. Anselm's has welcomed Rev. Will Scott as our priest through Lent and perhaps beyond. During this time, we will all get to know Rev. Will better and he will have a chance to familiarize himself with us as individuals and with the work of our congregation. Rev. Will was Associate Rector 2020-2023 at Christ Episcopal Church in Alameda and has served various leadership roles as well as local congregational since his graduation from the Virginia Theological Seminary in 2004. We look forward to Rev. Will starting us off in 2024 with new visions and ideas for the year ahead.

2023 was a challenging year for our St Anselm's family and while we accomplished a great deal, we also shared frustrations that continue to be addressed. The operational improvements needed are resolved or will be in the next few months. These include returning to our pre-pandemic system for counting and handling of finances. We addressed facility maintenance issues that had long been in need by repaving the parking lot, initiating fire mitigation and landscape beautification. We converted the lease we held for the cell tower to a buyout of over \$350,000 which we have invested in government backed CDs. We welcomed John Powers as our Treasurer and Margaret Wolfe as our new Office Administrator who replaced retiring Cathy Witkay.

In 2023 St. Anselm's reached out to the community with several new events such as the Lamorinda Safety Fair. We invited the community to bring their pets to our annual blessing of the animals and we are planning more such community events in 2024. Our congregation hosted homeless families in transition through the Winter Nights program. Our efforts for Trinity Center included the return of our Annual Dinner and Auction event that raised approximately \$45k for Trinity Center. "Thank You" to the many, many people who put in time, talent and financial support as we moved ahead in 2023 with new community involvement and our commitments to outreach

As your Sr. Warden I will do all that is possible to make St. Anselm's stronger before retiring from the Vestry later this year. I look forward to serving our community knowing that we are guided by the love of God and committed to serve Him in every way possible in the year ahead.

Marty Fischer  
Sr. Warden

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## *WINTER UPDATES FROM MICHAEL LANE PRESCHOOL*

Happy New Year!

We have started our year by learning about Winter. We made snow for our sensory bin, read many books about winter weather and clothes, cut out rain drops, and even embraced the cozy spirit of the season by wearing our pajamas to school, and making pancakes. We have been working on learning all of the names of our classmates, and now identifying our own names when we sign in to school in the morning.

You may have seen our lemon tree growing in the corner of the playground, and I'm happy to report that the children picked 15 lemons this January and we made a delicious pitcher of lemonade for our snack.

I am still giving many tours of our school and accepting applications for the 2024-2025 school year. It is heartwarming to see so many alumni families coming back and submitting applications even after some years away.

Wishing you a great start to our new year!  
Warmly,  
Holly Higgins





# *ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES*

**Wednesday, February 14th**  
at noon and 7:00 p.m.

## *ANNOUNCING THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS*

**Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Congregational Listening Session**

**11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.**

Rev. Will, our new long term supply priest, will facilitate a listening session between vestry leaders and congregation members to help deepen our collective understanding of the challenges St. Anselm's faced in the last few months of 2023. This is an opportunity for congregation members to share questions, concerns, and perspectives, and for all to listen with openness and respect to one another.

**Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Congregational Business Meeting**

### *From Rev. Will*

*(continued from page 1)*

the Community of Resurrection means listening more than it does merely complying. According to the Community of the Resurrection, "the heart of obedience is listening to Christ as he listens to us, so that from it will come a word of life. Christ is in my brother, and so there is mutual obedience, listening to Christ in each other." Finally, the Community speaks of "conversion of life," which means turning from what we were and towards what we shall be, while sustaining a climate of God's living presence.

Staying in one place. Listening. Turning to the future. St. Anselm's may not be a monastic community like Mirfield, but we can learn from these core values, as lived out by Alan Jones and others, and in the joyful application of these ideas to our own walks with God. And we, too, can welcome others to come, see, learn and share.

-Rev. Will Scott, Guest Priest

### *Anselm's Angels*

*(continued from page 1)*

ushering on Christmas for ushering on Christmas Eve and **Greg Heiman and Doug Merrill** for ushering on New Year's Eve.

A special thank you to our gifted musicians **Iris Hillman** (10 a.m. and most of December) and **Gail Burnett** (5 p.m.) for providing our Christmas Eve music. Also the talented angels who sang for us: **Burl Hall and Nidhi Pardeep** (Campo students), **Madison Chamberlain, Vicki Pappas, Al Eames, Marty Fischer, Avon Wilson and Barbara Thornton**.

Many thanks to **Jon Martin** for stepping in to provide Zoom duties for our Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve services.



## *Vestry Meeting Update*

The Vestry met three times in December and January, focusing on next steps related to clergy and staff transitions as well as regular church business.

On December 4 we continued to discuss the forces and factors that contributed to Rev. Stephen Siptroth's short tenure as St. Anselm's Rector. We identified three contributing categories: interpersonal concerns; business process and governance concerns; and factors outside of the immediate control of our congregation and Vestry. We began to identify potential remedies, many of which are already in the works:

- Upping our willingness to be open; greater attention to being warm and welcoming to all
- Adjusting some business and decision-making processes, and ensuring that the full Vestry understands those processes
- Clarifying the governance role of the Vestry
- Considering outside mediation to help us navigate interpersonal dynamics and/or resistance to change

On December 18 we focused primarily on regular church business. Discussion topics and decisions included:

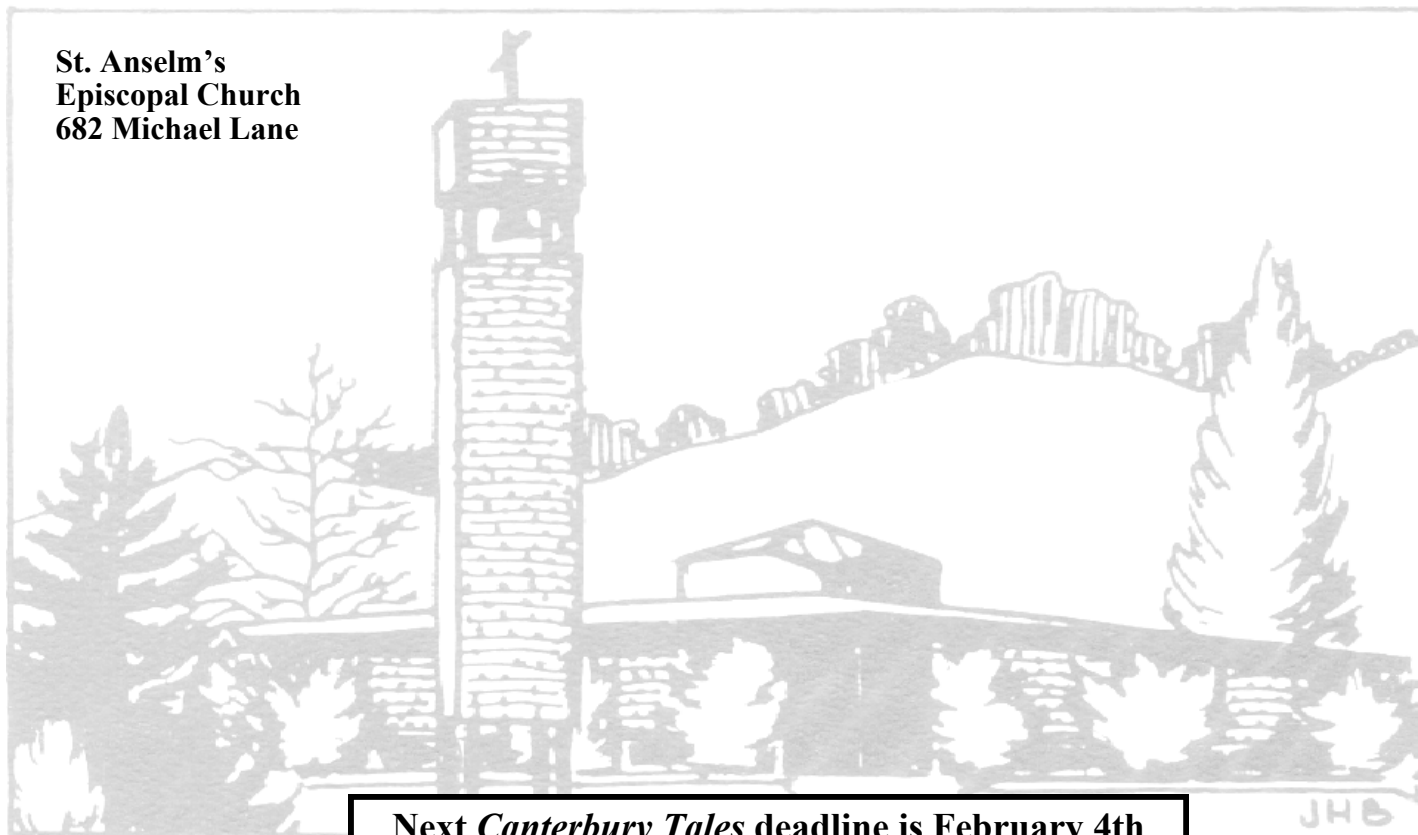
- Review of Quarter 3 2023 financials and discussion of a proposed 2024 budget
- Discussion of options related to Vestry member changes and elections, led by a Nominating Committee made up of Elisabeth Ward, Marty Fischer, Neva Flaherty and Chris Young
- Updates and recommendations regarding financial management changes that are needed in order to bring us into alignment with recommended best practices
- A decision to hold over the spending we had budgeted for 2023 Outreach spending until 2024, when we will engage in a process to review and refresh our Outreach priorities
- Plans to engage Rev. Will Scott as a supply priest in January
- Regular updates from committees and commissions

On January 15, during our regularly scheduled monthly Vestry meeting, our discussion topics and decisions included:

- A final review of the 2024 budget
- Deliberations and a decision to hire Rev. Audrey Miskelley, a local Episcopal priest who specializes in transition and church healing work, as a part-time external consultant beginning February 1. Rev. Audrey will engage in a confidential listening process through which we expect to gain a fuller understanding of the rift that led to Stephen's resignation and identify a course of action that will help move our community forward with healing and reconciliation.
- Updates on office operations; an initial review of opportunities for Vestry members to assume certain administrative responsibilities; and a decision to establish a 3-month consulting relationship with Cathy Witkay to ensure that bookkeeping responsibilities are handled while office and financial oversight transitions continue.
- Institution of a policy that all checks, regardless of amount, will now require two Vestry signatures and identification of Vestry members to serve as bank account managers and/or check signers.
- A decision to hold a congregational meeting on February 4
- A decision to continue Rev. Will's role as a long-term supply priest through the end of March (and Easter)

For more information, contact any member of the Vestry. Vestry meeting minutes and financial reports are available on request.

St. Anselm's  
Episcopal Church  
682 Michael Lane



**Next *Canterbury Tales* deadline is February 4th**

### ***UPCOMING EVENTS***

**Tuesday January 23<sup>rd</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> February 6<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> — Morning Prayer** will be led by Deacon Naomi via Zoom at 9 AM. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at [orchidsnrch@yahoo.com](mailto:orchidsnrch@yahoo.com).

**Tuesday January 23<sup>rd</sup>/30<sup>th</sup>/February 6<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> — Evening Bible Study** will meet via Zoom at 7:00 PM. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at [orchidsnrch@yahoo.com](mailto:orchidsnrch@yahoo.com).

**Tuesday February 6<sup>th</sup> — Grief Support Group** will meet via Zoom at 12:00 noon. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at [orchidsnrch@yahoo.com](mailto:orchidsnrch@yahoo.com).

**Sunday February 4<sup>th</sup> — Congregational Listening Session** will be held immediately following service.

**Sunday February 11<sup>th</sup> — Cancer Support Group** will meet in the conference room and via Zoom at 11:45 AM. To be invited, email Julie Rinckenberger at [jrjpmaggie@hotmail.com](mailto:jrjpmaggie@hotmail.com).

**Wednesday February 14<sup>th</sup> — Ash Wednesday Services** will be held at noon and 7pm.

**Sunday February 18<sup>th</sup> — Congregational Business Meeting** will be held immediately following service.

**Monday February 19<sup>th</sup> — Vestry** will meet in the conference room and via Zoom at 7:00 PM. Vestry members will receive an email from Chris Young with the meeting link.

**Wednesday February 21<sup>st</sup> — Stephen Ministers** will meet via Zoom at 7:00 PM. Stephen Ministers will receive a link from Vicki Pappas.

**Thursday February 22<sup>nd</sup> — Living Well Through Lent 2024: Practicing Forgiveness with All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind** will meet via Zoom at 6:00 PM. Facilitated by members of the Christian Formation Commission and Rev. Will. To be invited, email Marian Mulkey at [marianmulkey@comcast.net](mailto:marianmulkey@comcast.net).

**Sunday February 25<sup>th</sup> — Building Community In Times of Change** in-person Speaker Series held following a light lunch from 11:30 AM to 12:45 PM.